THE LOCATION OF THE CHICAGO PORTAGE ROUTE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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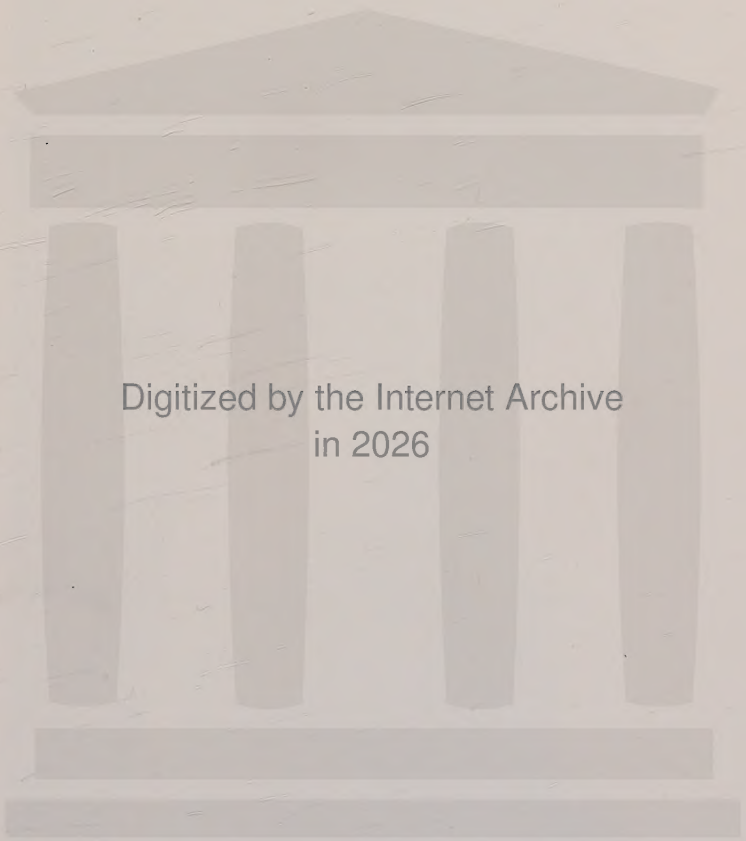
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PORTAGE CREEK AS IT IS TODAY

Joliet and Father Marquette turned from the Des Plaines at this point and entered Portage Creek (shown in the middle background). Here began the history of Chicago.

Photo by Mr. and Mrs. Fenton S. Fox, (1925)

THE LOCATION OF THE CHICAGO PORTAGE ROUTE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A Paper read before the Chicago Historical Society, May 1, 1923, and later elaborated for publication

By

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and

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FOREWORD

The primitive beginnings of every great city have a peculiar charm for those who have watched the city develop, a charm that increases with the lengthening perspective.

The location of the portage between the Chicago and the Des Plaines rivers is perhaps the chief hereditary problem that has been bequeathed by successive research committees of the Chicago Historical Society, the question having been propounded by Dr. William Barry, the founder and first secretary of the society, at the very inception of the institution in 1856.

Following in the footsteps of Albert D. Hager, Edward Gay Mason and Rufus Blanchard, whose keen interest led them again and again to the shores of Mud Lake and whose findings are recorded in the proceedings of the society, charts were drafted at different periods by C. E. Petford. The late Ossian Guthrie, John F. Steward and Carl Dilg each added something to the literature of the subject. Mr. Guthrie's knowledge was gained by study of post-glacial conditions in the course of his long residence in the Chicago region; Mr. Steward was a profound student of the cartography and journals of the explorers, having, after reaching the age of sixty-five, mastered the French language in order to read the original texts; Mr. Dilg had explored this region, particularly searching for Stone Age remains. Encouraged by Dr. Otto L. Schmidt's never flagging interest and financial assistance, Albert F. Scharf, a man unusually gifted in graphic representation of geography, has more recently charted the conclusions arrived at by himself and his predecessors.

None of these investigations was definite, for all were based upon insufficient information, due to the fact that the needed official surveys could not be brought to light. It should be borne in mind that none of these was professional men and that all of them were past middle life when their investigations were begun.

It seems very fitting that this quest, begun nearly three-quarters of a century ago by the founders of the society, should have been taken up at length by two younger men, born in Chicago, to whom the Mud Lake region was the favorite land of adventure because of their early study of the journals of the explorers. One a civil engineer deeply versed in conditions of the Chicago terrain, the other a physician, both trained in research methods and endowed with indomitable perseverance that has carried them over obstructions that baffled the ingenuity and overtaxed the energy of their elders.

Not content with bringing to light long-forgotten surveys and reports in city, State and national archives, they have invaded foreign archives, expending time, money and energy lavishly in this interesting adventure, the outcome of which enables the Historical Society to endow the youth of Chicago with a definite background for the earliest history of this region that plays so conspicuous a part in the world to-day.

At a regular meeting of the society on May 1, 1923, the authors presented the main points of this thesis. It can but be gratifying to the officers of the society that this age-long quest has at last been settled, enabling them to indicate, in all its stages, the true route of the portage that made it practical for trade to penetrate to the heart of the continent; for to that same portage is due, in large part, the advance of civilization in this region.

The make-up of this book is somewhat in the nature of an atlas, with accompanying text, for, with but

ninety-eight pages of reading matter, there are ten original surveys, eight maps and thirty-four photographs. The photographs, being made to show the topographical features of the Mud Lake region, are invaluable to students, for many conditions have been altered since these views were secured.

It is not too much to say that without the discovery of certain of these surveys the story of Chicago's early history could not be definitely known, and that this volume is the key to the first chapter of Chicago's history.

The reader who would know the Chicago terrain will be well repaid by a minute study of the Harrison and Guion map of 1829, and those who would learn the conditions of Chicago as the terminus of the canal will do well to scan the Post and Paul survey. The authors' own maps in this volume summarize the data gathered in their long investigation in a manner of which they may well be proud.

Incidental to the location of the portage the authors have the honor of exploding a time-honored fallacy, namely, the statement that the mouth of the Chicago River was, in the "twenties" and "thirties," as far south as Madison Street, for by superimposing the Harrison-Howard survey and the Post and Paul survey on a present-day map they have shown the true location of the mouth to have been a little south of Lake Street. In this particular all published histories must be revised.

The importance of this discovery is manifest, for as from time to time excavations expose portions of the lower strata upon which the early town was built, interpretation of "finds" in accordance with the true topography of the tract east of State Street and north of Madison will be for the first time possible—the local point of the old trails, the exact locations of the old fur-traders' posts, the first homes, the first inns and the buildings of Fort Dearborn.

The location of the "Portage de Checagou," the route of Joliet and Father Marquette through Chicago and the Chicago region, we now believe has been settled for all time.

Too much credit cannot be accorded Dr. O. L. Schmidt, past president of the society, for his early recognition of the valuable results of this study.

Not only has his tireless energy begun a movement which it is hoped will accomplish the permanent marking and properly preserving of these historic sites, but it is also due to his urging and encouragement that the authors' paper read May 1, 1923, has been elaborated and amplified for publication, thus giving a degree of permanence to the results.

Already has this research borne fruit in accomplishing the preservation of Stony Ford. The destruction of this fording place seemed imminent when the survey for "State Highway Number 4" located the bridge across the Des Plaines directly over it. Through the efforts of a committee composed of Dr. Otto L. Schmidt, Dr. Zeuch and Mr. Robert Knight, and the vigorous co-operation of Mrs. E. W. Bemis, then Cook County Commissioner, the proposed location of the bridge was changed and it was built one hundred and fifty feet north of the ford.

Portage Creek, the "birthplace of Chicago," the place where Joliet and Father Marquette turned from the Des Plaines into Mud Lake, still in its natural condition, is threatened with destruction by the march of public improvements. It should by all means be included in the Forest Preserves and a determined effort by patriotic Chicagoans should be made at once to save it, for it will be a deplorable thing if this historic site, so important in the annals of the "Old Northwest," is not preserved.

C.M.M.

INTRODUCTION

This little work, let the reader be assured, is not intended to be a history of Chicago and the old Northwest. Several existing works treat this subject so exhaustively as to discourage any effort of the present authors to enter the field of the general history of this region.

The scope of our work is limited to an effort to locate with precision and to describe accurately the old Chicago Portage that passed into history with the passing of the fur trade, about 1835. The march of events that almost overnight transformed the Chicago area from a region of hunting grounds and fur-traders' posts to that of an enterprising city with a hinterland of prosperous farming communities, caused the portage, after one hundred and sixty years of supreme importance, to be forgotten with astonishing rapidity. The chief of these events were of course the opening of the Indian country after the Black-Hawk War and the promise of a canal to connect Lake Michigan with the Illinois River. The absence of recorded data on the portage is accounted for by the fact that those who had made the greatest use of this route, men like Gurdon S. Hubbard, the Kinzies and the Beaubiens, had foreseen the decline of the fur trade and adapted themselves to changing conditions and changed methods of transportation. Consequently when the boom came these men had their hands so full of business that they gave no time nor thought to recording the details of the now unimportant carrying place.

In the absence of reliable information concerning the course and location of the portage, the task of relocating this ancient highway of commerce has been a pleasant pastime, or more accurately a romantic adventure for the present writers, who have only redoubled their efforts when exhaustive research revealed conflicting theories and vague suppositions as to just where the Chicago Portage was located. Experience gained in boyhood days, when hikes and bicycle expeditions had as their objective the discovery of Indian trails and ancient lake beaches, stood us in good stead. Claims and theories without number were investigated and, together with the descriptions left by those who had actually used the portage, were checked with the records and plats of old surveys that had not been made use of by our predecessors; concurrently an examination was made of the sites of all the portages traversing that segment of the Continental Divide between Lake Michigan and the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers.

As a result of these researches and explorations, by collating the physical conditions extant in recent times with the documentary evidence newly brought to light, we reached the conclusion that the age-old mystery had been cleared up and that the route taken by Joliet and Marquette, the first persons of record to traverse this region, was by way of the Des Plaines River, Mud Lake and the Chicago River, and that this route through what is now the city of Chicago was the true Chicago Portage used by the later missionaries, explorers, and fur-traders.

To prove the above statements the region of Mud Lake was traversed on foot times without number at various seasons of the year, the Des Plaines and Illinois valleys were repeatedly explored as far as the city of La Salle, and expeditions were made to Peoria, St. Louis and Cahokia.

The more intensive study always returning to Mud Lake, it gradually became possible to define the shore line as it existed in early times, together with the channels that ran through it, as well as to determine the various stages of the lake during the wet and dry seasons. Many of the physical features of the region being still in a state of nature when we began our study, they were a material aid to us in the delineation of areas that have been altered by the hand of man. Correlating our findings with data assembled from all known maps, field notes and surveys, of which several had lain forgotten in government and State archives for a century, we have been able to chart definite lines and locations that are now delineated for the first time, practically reconstructing a prominent feature of Chicago's topography that, together with the location of the Chicago Portage, has been shrouded in mystery for more than ninety years.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Otto L. Schmidt, former president, and to Miss Caroline M. McIlvaine, former librarian, of the Chicago Historical Society, for their courtesy in placing the collected data of the society at our disposal for research purposes, and also to the following named gentlemen who accorded us every facility for studying the maps and records in their charge:

Brigadier General H. Taylor, U.S.A., Assistant Chief of Engineers, and Lieutenant Colonel G. B. Pillsbury, U.S.A., Corps of Engineers, in the office of Chief Engineer, War Department, Washington, D. C.; E. B. Merit, Assistant Commissioner, and C. F. Hauke, Chief Clerk in Office of Indian affairs, Department of Interior, Washington, D. C.; H. C. Alexander, Engineers Department, of the Illinois State Department of Public Works and Buildings; Morton L. Cressy, Counsel for the Sanitary District of Chicago.

In addition we wish also to express our grateful appreciation to the many persons whose courtesies were extended to us in the field, in libraries, and in response to our letters and inquiries.

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THE LOCATION OF THE CHICAGO PORTAGE ROUTE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter I

HISTORY OF THE PORTAGE

Chicago is situated, as is well known, on the west shore of Lake Michigan near its southern end at the place where the Chicago River, until the hand of man changed its direction, flowed eastward into the lake.

Just why this particular location should upon its discovery become of first importance and be the site where there has developed one of the largest cities in the world will quite readily be understood when it is pointed out that in the prairie to the west of the business district of the metropolis a little lake a few miles in length had its outlet at its western end, draining into the Des Plaines River, while its eastern end in average seasons came within one and one-half miles of the headwaters of the south branch of the Chicago River, thus forming the shortest and most direct connection between the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System and the Mississippi River System, those two mighty continental waterways, the natural highways through the wilderness.

The one and one-half miles of prairie that normally separated the two river systems constituted a part of the Continental Divide and was denominated by the French "Le Portage de Checagou," meaning the land

over which it was necessary to carry boats and their cargoes when passing from one to the other, briefly a "land carriage" or "carrying place." In contradistinction the route by way of the Chicago River and Mud Lake down the Des Plaines Valley was known as the "Chicago Portage Route." There was probably no other place of like importance on the American continent, for there is every reason to believe that it had been a meeting place, and a much-traveled route of the Indians and of prehistoric man centuries before the discovery of America. The Chicago Portage had been from the earliest times one of the five great "keys of the continent," as Hulbert denominated the five principal highways that led from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River in the interest of travel, transportation and trade.

Furs that were purchased for a string of beads or a tomahawk, and that later lent to the magnificence of the courts of Europe, passed over the old Chicago Portage on their way to Paris. From the time of the discovery of the portage by the white man to the present day the history of the great northwest has revolved around it. Its value in the past as the connecting link of transportation is paralleled by Chicago's present-day importance as the terminal and connection point of more railroads and other means of travel than any other place in the world; in fact, the marvelous city of Chicago itself is simply the present-day development of the trading post at the old Chicago Portage, and the very name "Chicago" is a contraction of its old name, "Chicago Portage."

The Chicago Portage was discovered by Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette in September, 1673. The Indians in the Great Lakes region had time and again told the French of the existence of a "Great River" that lay in the West. Finally Frontenac, the governor

of New France, commissioned Joliet to discover and explore the river, and Father Marquette, a Jesuit missionary, was appointed to accompany the expedition. Their journey began at St. Ignace May 17, 1673, and proceeded by way of Lake Michigan, Green Bay and the Fox-Wisconsin River route to the Mississippi, which they entered June 17, 1673.

After exploring the "Great River" as far south as the mouth of the Arkansas River, their return journey was begun. The Indians they met in that region informed them of a shorter route to Lake Michigan by way of the Illinois River. Of this they decided to take advantage. Journeying up the Illinois and the Des Plaines rivers to a place about midway between the sites of the present villages of Summit and Riverside, they came to a little creek that was the outlet of Mud Lake. Here they turned and traversed Mud Lake to its eastern end, about the place at which the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River crosses the line of Kedzie Avenue in the city of Chicago. There they disembarked, carried or "portaged" their canoes and cargoes across the one and one-half miles of intervening prairie and again launching in the west fork resumed their journey by way of Lake Michigan to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Father Marquette's journal of this expedition is a most wonderful story of their experiences and is the first record of the presence of white men at the site of Chicago.[1]

From Green Bay Joliet proceeded to Quebec and reported to his superiors. Marquette decided to stop at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier at Green Bay, as he had promised the Indians on the Illinois to return and

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[1] *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents; Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791.* Reuben Gold Thwaites, Editor. (Cleveland, 1896-1901.) 73 Vols. Vol. 59, pp. 87-163.

found a mission among them. Being in poor health he stayed all winter at Green Bay and, still unable to travel during the following summer, his return journey was not begun until October 25, 1674. He arrived at Chicago for the second time in December of that year, and his journal [2] for December 14 contains the following significant entry:

> "Being cabined near the portage, two leagues up the river, we resolved to winter there, on my inability to go further, being too much embarrassed and my malady not permitting me to stand much fatigue."

Here, with two companions, he remained until March 30, 1675, they being the first white persons of record to reside in Chicago.

The full import of Joliet's and Marquette's discovery was hidden from that age; but Joliet's report that "it would only be necessary to cut a canal through half a league of prairie to go in a bark by easy navigation from Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico," [3] drew the attention of the civilized world to the Chicago Portage, and Joliet's ship-canal project has persisted from 1674 to the present day.

At that time the fur trade was the one great commercial activity of the country and the chief source of revenue for the French in Canada. The imperial vision of Réné-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, who had been in America since 1669, saw in the possession of the Mississippi and the control of its approaches opportunity for the monopoly of the fur trade, expansion of empire and increased power for France. Returning to France, this

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[2] *Jesuit Relations, etc.*, Vol. 59, pp. 165-183.

[3] *Father Claude Dablon's Report; Jesuit Relations.* Vol. 58, p. 105. Dablon, as superior, edited the Relations of 1671 and 1672, and compiled others covering the period of 1673-79; he also edited the papers of Father Marquette's exploring expeditions.

indomitable empire builder, through the friendship and patronage of Frontenac, then governor of Canada, obtained from Louis XIV an order of knighthood, a grant of land and permission to explore, colonize and take possession of the Mississippi Valley in the name of the King of France.

La Salle immediately proceeded to put into effect an elaborate and comprehensive plan of colonization, trade and commerce. In 1678, on the bank of a little creek that empties into Niagara River several miles above Niagara Falls, he began the construction of a sailing vessel to be used for conveying furs from the Illinois country through the Great Lakes and to carry supplies to his colonies on its return trips. At the same time he sent a party of men to the Illinois country to prepare for his coming. His vessel, which he named the "Griffon," was finished in August, 1679. He sailed with it to Green Bay, where it was loaded with furs and its return trip started.

Meanwhile La Salle and fourteen followers proceeded in canoes down the western shore of Lake Michigan past the site of Chicago and around the southern end of the lake to the mouth of the St. Joseph River. At this place he had agreed to meet Henri de Tonty, his trusted lieutenant, who had disembarked from the "Griffon" at Mackinac to await its return from Green Bay, and was now making his way down the eastern side of Lake Michigan with twenty followers. Tonty not having reached the appointed place, La Salle utilized the time by building Fort Miami near the mouth of the St. Joseph River. When Tonty finally arrived on November 12 he brought news of the probable loss of the "Griffon" with its cargo of furs, the returning vessel never having reached Mackinac. On December 3 the combined party began the trip up the St. Joseph River to where South Bend, Indiana, is now located. Here

they crossed the portage to the Kankakee River, upon which they traveled to the Illinois River. Continuing down the Illinois River to the vicinity of the present city of Peoria, La Salle established the first civilized settlement in the Illinois region and on the bluffs above the river built a fort which he named Fort Crèvecœur.

The loss of his vessel made it necessary for La Salle to return for supplies to Fort Frontenac, where is now the modern city of Kingston, Ontario. Before leaving he started Father Hennepin and a small party on the exploration of the upper Mississippi and placed Tonty in command of Fort Crèvecœur. On March 1, 1680, with a few companions La Salle began his journey. Passing Starved Rock near the present city of Utica, Illinois, he noted its strategic value and resolved to change his base of operations to this place. From Fort Miami he sent back word to Tonty to abandon the lower fort and build one upon the rock.

La Salle finally arrived at Fort Frontenac after a most terrible experience, none of his original party being able to accompany him the whole distance. Regarding this trip Parkman states: "During sixty-five days he had toiled almost incessantly, traveling, by the course he took, about a thousand miles through a country beset with every form of peril and obstruction—'the most arduous journey . . . . ever made by Frenchmen in America.' Such was Cavelier de la Salle. In him an unconquerable mind held at its service a frame of iron, and tasked it to the utmost of its endurance. The pioneer of western pioneers was no rude son of toil, but a man of thought, trained amid arts and letters."[4]

After many discouragements, on August 6, 1680, La Salle again started for the Illinois country. Accompanying him were his lieutenant La Forest and

[4] Francis Parkman: *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West.* (Boston, 1897.) 2 Vols. Vol. 1, p. 198.

twenty-four men. Leaving La Forest and part of his force at Mackinac, he proceeded to Starved Rock, expecting to find Tonty in the new stronghold. Instead he found an awful scene of carnage and desolation. The great Indian village opposite the rock that had been for five years the scene of the labors of Marquette's successors had been completely wiped out by the Iroquois. La Salle followed the Illinois River to its mouth without finding a sign of Tonty, and with great regret, as this was the first time he had seen the Mississippi, turned about and began his return.

Tonty meanwhile had on receipt of La Salle's orders started for the Rock to build a fort. In his absence the men he left at Fort Crèvecœur deserted him, destroyed the fort and stole its provisions. When the Iroquois attacked the Illinois Indians about the Rock, Tonty did everything he could to save them from destruction, but, failing in this, fled with his few followers to avoid certain destruction to themselves. Their destination was the Pottawattamie village on Green Bay, to reach which they journeyed up the Illinois and Des Plaines, through Mud Lake and over the Chicago Portage, following the west shore of Lake Michigan to Green Bay, a most terrible trip comparable only with the trip La Salle had made the previous winter.[5]

When La Salle reached the junction of the Illinois and Des Plaines he turned up the Des Plaines and soon found signs of Tonty. Satisfied that he had escaped, La Salle made his way overland to Fort Miami, where he stayed that winter forming plans to effect a confederacy among the Illinois Indians against their common enemy, the Iroquois. Returning to Starved Rock the following spring he met the first of the returning Illinois fugitives. Effecting a welding of the Illinois

[5] Parkman: *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West.* Vol. I, Chapter XVI.

tribes, he negotiated a treaty with them, his object being to colonize them about the Rock, which he would make his base and the seat of a French colony. With the French flag over all, he hoped to hold the Iroquois in check and establish a great trading post whose outlet should be the Gulf of Mexico and not the St. Lawrence. At Mackinac on his return journey to Canada he met Tonty, who accompanied him to Montreal. Here it was necessary for him to pacify his creditors and obtain financial backing for his third expedition.

Finally successful, La Salle, Tonty and twenty-five Frenchmen reached Fort Miami in November, 1681. From there, led by Tonty, the first contingent of the expedition started December 21, 1681. Traveling around the southern end of Lake Michigan, they sojourned at the Chicago River, where they built sledges for the southward journey. La Salle with a second division followed in January. The combined forces, numbering with the accompanying Indians somewhat more than fifty people, placed their canoes and luggage upon these sledges and dragged them on the ice up the river, across the portage and over Mud Lake, down the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers, until open water was reached at Peoria. Three months later, April 9, 1682, they reached the mouth of the Mississippi and La Salle took possession of all the vast country drained by it and its tributaries, in the name of the French King.[6]

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[6] John Gilmary Shea: *Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi, by Cavelier, St. Cosme, Le Sueur, Gravier, and Guignas.* (Albany, 1861.) *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley.* (New York, 1852.) p. 166.

Father Christian le Clercq, Recollect Missionary: *First Establishment of the Faith in New France; translated from Relation de la Gaspésie, 1691,* by John Gilmary Shea. (New York, 1881.) Vol. I, pp. 26-36.

Tonty: *Relation of Henry de Tonty Concerning the Explorations of La Salle from 1678-1683.* Translated by Melville B. Anderson (Caxton

Returning to the Illinois country during the following winter with his able lieutenant and friend Tonty, he directed the building of Fort St. Louis on the summit of Starved Rock and soon gathered about it a colony of some four thousand warriors who with their families totaled about twenty thousand souls.

The future of this colony depended on La Salle's ability to protect its members from the Iroquois and to furnish them with goods and a market for their furs. Affairs were going well; La Salle had indeed laid the cornerstone of a new empire which gave great promise of a brilliant future, and he began to feel his long wanderings were at an end. But once more his plans were upset. Frontenac, the governor, his staunchest friend, had been recalled and a new governor appointed.

De la Barre, the new governor, was intensely hostile to La Salle and finally sent another commander to replace him at Fort St. Louis in the autumn of 1683. La Salle immediately went to France by way of the Chicago Portage—where he tarried long enough to pen a letter to Tonty and the others at the Rock, urging them to the greatest scrupulousness in dealing with the Indians and directing them to give strict obedience to the orders of the new commander who would supersede him. [This letter, dated September 1, 1683, which does not appear in Margry, is in the Edward Gay Mason papers of the Chicago Historical Society.] Appealing to Louis XIV, he was successful in overthrowing his enemies, and was himself restored to his former power, La Barre being rebuked and his actions reversed. La Salle's proposal to establish a colony at the mouth of the

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Club, Chicago, 1898). *Entreprises de M. de la Salle (de 1678 à 1683). Relation écrite de Québec le 14 Novembre, 1684, par Henri de Tonty.* pp. 59-63.

Beckwith, H. W. *Illinois Historical Collections.* 1903. Vol. I, pp. 106-113.

Mississippi was well received and in 1684 with about one hundred and seventy-five colonists in four ships he sailed from France for the Mississippi. Misfortune again was his lot. La Salle had taken the latitude of the mouth of the Mississippi, which was a simple matter, at the time of his visit there in 1682, but he either had no means of taking its longitude or observed it incorrectly and became a victim of his error in longitude.[7] A storm and a dispute, some have suggested a betrayal, worked havoc and the colonists were landed some four hundred miles too far west on the shore of Texas, where they attempted to found a colony. Then follows a tale of misery, disappointment, suffering, treachery and death.

For two years La Salle sought in vain for the Mississippi, his colony rapidly diminishing, and finally to save the remnants he resolved to make a desperate attempt to reach Canada on foot. On January 12, 1687, the party, consisting of seventeen persons, started. Urging his men over the vast plains, swimming the rivers that crossed their path, they eventually made their way to Trinity River in Texas, where on the twentieth day of March, as the result of a mutinous conspiracy among a part of his followers, La Salle was ambushed and cruelly murdered. A number of his loyal followers were killed also and later a quarrel among the conspirators resulted in the killing of several of his murderers, including the man who was the actual murderer of La Salle. The new leader generously dividing the goods of the party, the conspirators chose to remain with the Indians, who directed toward Canada seven of La Salle's loyal followers who had survived.

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[7] *"La Salle a Victim to His Error in Longitude;"* J. F. Steward, Publication No. 15, Illinois State Historical Library. Transactions for 1910. pp. 129-136.

Parkman: *La Salle, etc.* 1907 edition. pp. 351-353.

Meanwhile Tonty, receiving the news and the benefits of La Salle's trip to France, had in 1686 journeyed with an expedition to the mouth of the Mississippi and was astonished not to find La Salle and a prosperous colony there, as he fully expected. Searching and inquiring without result he returned to Fort St. Louis.

On September 14, 1687, there arrived at Fort St. Louis, now known as Starved Rock, the seven fugitives from La Salle's unhappy colony in Texas, one of them being La Salle's own brother, the Abbé Cavelier. They hid the news of La Salle's death and delayed their departure for Canada as little as possible. Going up the Des Plaines they passed through Mud Lake to the Chicago River, but were delayed a week at its mouth by a storm. After proceeding twenty miles or so along the lake shore they realized their inability to reach Green Bay, and in fear of starvation were compelled to retrace their way through the Chicago Portage back to Fort St. Louis. Here they wintered with Tonty and were made welcome. In the spring they took advantage of the first mild weather and on March 31, 1688, departed. Again passing over the Chicago Portage they proceeded to Quebec, and from there sailed for France, where they landed at Rochelle October 9, 1688, and were soon able to tell their terrible secret at the French court.

The French and their Indian allies during this period controlled the Chicago Portage and the entire fur trade of the region. Meanwhile in the East the English fur-traders viewed the situation with envious eyes. Forming an alliance with the Iroquois Indians, who were long standing and bitter enemies of the Illinois Indians, they urged and drove the Iroquois to harass and make war upon the French and their allies to the end that they might share in or control the immense fur trade of the great northwest. For twelve years after La Salle's

death Tonty bravely kept his Indian allies together and maintained control of the Chicago Portage through a series of disastrous and losing encounters with the unfriendly Indians, but in 1700 he and his allies were compelled to abandon Chicago and the northern Illinois region. Thus did La Salle's dream of empire come to a close and for nearly one hundred years thereafter the Chicago Portage was virtually a wilderness in the possession and under the domination of the Indians.

The value of the Chicago Portage as a trade route at no time diminished, however, and numerous attempts were made to wrest control of it from the Indians, the region about it being the scene of many sanguinary conflicts. The French in possession of the Green Bay region were also in force at Fort Chartres and Cahokia, near St. Louis. Another settlement and a French fort were situated at Ouatanon near the site of the present city of Lafayette, Indiana. In 1730 parties of French met by pre-arrangement somewhere between Chicago and Starved Rock. Here they trapped and destroyed a large number of Fox Indians in an effort to gain possession of the Chicago Portage and open up the region. Mr. John F. Steward locates the site of this siege two miles south of the present village of Plano, Illinois.[8] The French, however, never succeeded in permanently re-establishing themselves in the Illinois Valley nor in obtaining control of the Chicago Portage, although the entire region was nominally French territory. The English, through their alliance with the Iroquois, gradually acquired control of the fur trade of the Northwest. By 1763 the British had wrested from France all her land and possessions in North America. For about fifteen years thereafter the English practically controlled the fur trade emanating from the Chicago region, all of the

[8] *Lost Maramech and Earliest Chicago.* J. F. Steward. Chap. XVII.

Northwest as far as the Mississippi River being British territory.

Following the opening of the Revolutionary War a series of new conflicts was staged, the Chicago Portage being used by both sides in various maneuvers. The lines of action were up and down the Mississippi from St. Louis to the mouth of the Wisconsin, and from Mackinac to the Ohio by way of Detroit, Toledo and the Wabash River, with the Chicago Portage as the most important crossing place in the disputed zone.[9]

At the close of the Revolutionary War, by the Treaty of Paris in 1783 the American Colonies were given territory that included all of the region east of the Mississippi from the Great Lakes south to Louisiana. The Chicago Portage was included by implication in the "Ordinance of Virginia," passed July 13, 1787, which act preceded our Constitution and virtually cemented the victorious colonies into a Union. The passage referred to reads as follows:

> "The navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways, and forever free, as well to the inhabitants of the said territory as to the citizens of the United States, and those of any other state that may be admitted into the Confederacy, without any tax, impost, or duty therefor."

The British, however, showed no inclination to give up the Northwest and finally openly refused to surrender this territory. Their real reason was the desire to keep the great fur trade, and retain control of the

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[9] *Illinois Historical Collections*. Vol. I. p. 364.
Michigan Pioneer Collections. Vol. IX. p. 489.
Chicago and the Old Northwest. Quaife. pp. 79-104.
Wisconsin Historical Collections. Vol. XI, pp. 122, 123.

Indians of the region. Although the Treaty of Paris gave the United States sovereignty of the region, it remained for them to extinguish the Indians' title to the land before opening it for settlement by the white man. The Indians, through the encouragement of the British, resisted all attempts to settle the territory north of the Ohio and finally openly attacked a party of settlers on the Ohio River.

The punitive expeditions of General Harmer and of General St. Clair against the Indians met disastrous defeat, and not until General Anthony Wayne drove the Indians northward, routing them from their strongholds at the neighborhoods of Fort Recovery and Fort Defiance and decisively defeating them August 20, 1794, at the "Battle of Fallen Timbers," on Maumee River near Toledo, was it possible to hold a conference and to enter into a treaty with them. This treaty, the Treaty of Greenville, concluded August 10, 1795, extinguished the Indian title to the land, roughly speaking, east and south of a line drawn from the Ohio River, at a point opposite the mouth of the Kentucky River to Fort Recovery, in Ohio, and from this point east to Muskingum River, about fifty miles south of Cleveland, thence north along the river and the Cuyahoga River to Cleveland.

The outstanding importance and value of the Chicago Portage is realized when it is noted that a provision of the treaty specified also the cession of "one piece of land six miles square at the mouth of Chicago River emptying into the Southwest end of Lake Michigan where a fort formerly stood," a similar piece at the site of Peoria and a piece twelve miles square at the mouth of the Illinois River emptying into the Mississippi and the "free passages of the portages and rivers connecting these grants." This cession obtained through the foresight of General Wayne set at naught a plan proposed

A Treaty of Peace between the United States of America, and the Tribes of Indians called the Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoes, Ottawas, Chipewas, Pattawatimies, Miamis, Eel River Weeas and Kickapoos.

To put an end to a destructive War, to settle all controversies, & to restore Harmony and a friendly intercourse between the said United States and Indian Tribes: Anthony Wayne Major General, Commanding the Army of the United States and sole Commissioner for the good purposes abovementioned, and the said Tribes of Indians by their Sachems, Chiefs, & Warriors met together at Greene Ville, the Head Quarters of the said Army, have agreed on the following Articles which when ratified by the President with the advice & consent of the Senate of the United States, shall be binding on them and the said Indian Tribes.

(14) One piece of Land Six Miles square at the Mouth of Chikago river emptying into the South West end of Lake Michagan where a Fort formerly stood (15) One piece twelve miles square at or near the mouth of the Illinois River emptying into the Mississippi (16) One piece Six miles which runs into Lake Erie, [illegible] Village near the South end of the Illinois Lake on said Illinois River.

Copy of a part of the Treaty of "Greenville," made at Greenville, Ohio, 1795. Taken from the original manuscript in possession of the Chicago Historical Society.

Article (14) here reproduced cedes to the government the site of original Chicago. This treaty among other things granted the free use of the rivers and portages from Chicago to the mouth of the Illinois.

by the British officer Simcoe to the Lords of Trade shortly after Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, namely, that British depots be established along the portages leading to the Mississippi Valley, especially at the Chicago Portage, with the intent to shut the American traders out of the Valley.[10]

The strategic value of the Chicago Portage was early recognized by the United States Government and after the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803 it was decided to delay no longer the erection of a fort on the square of land ceded by the Treaty of Greenville. The erection of the first Fort Dearborn was ordered by President Jefferson in 1803. It was completed the following year and endured until 1812. During this period, by reason of the protection the fort afforded, the fur trade was carried on intensively, the Chicago Portage being the great highway of travel and trade. After the massacre and the burning of Fort Dearborn by the Indian allies of Great Britain, a consequence of the War of 1812, the region again reverted to the Indians for a period of four years.

In 1816, after the Treaty of Ghent had ended the war of 1812, the Government ordered the reconstruction of the fort. The building of the second Fort Dearborn was the signal for the return of the fur-traders and they came in increasing numbers. An immense amount of traffic was now passing over the Chicago Portage. The growing number of Indians in canoes, traders in boats and in wagons, struggling across the portage and through Mud Lake were harbingers of the cry for internal improvements that was beginning to be heard throughout the land. On August 24, 1816, a treaty with the Indians was concluded by which they ceded the territory comprehended between the Indian

[10] *The Westward Movement: the Colonies and the Republic West of the Alleghenies, 1763-1798.* Winsor. (Boston, 1897.) p. 461.

boundary lines ten miles north and ten miles south of the mouth of the river as shown on modern maps of Chicago. This grant was obtained for the express purpose of building a canal and a military road to accommodate the immense amount of traffic going through the Chicago Portage.

As early as 1808 Albert Gallatin laid before Congress the project of the construction of a canal across the Chicago Portage. In 1814 President Madison in his message at the opening of Congress recommended its attention to the building of a ship canal connecting the waters of Lake Michigan at Chicago with the Illinois River.

Then events began to move more rapidly. In 1822 Congress passed an Act authorizing the State of Illinois to open a canal through the public lands to connect the Illinois River with Lake Michigan. February 14, 1823, the General Assembly of Illinois passed an act to provide for the internal navigation of the State. The commissioners named in the act employed Post and Paul, engineers, "to survey, explore and execute a map of the region of the proposed canal." The Government in 1830 opened for settlement the public lands ceded by the Indians. A wonderful transition was taking place. Settlers now began to pour into the region and make permanent homes for themselves.

By September 25, 1833, all of the Indian titles to land east of the Mississippi had been extinguished. The Black Hawk War was over and the country was rapidly becoming settled by agriculturalists, people who had nothing in common with the fur-traders who had preceded them. In 1835 the Indians were transferred from the Chicago region to their reservations beyond the Mississippi and the final remnants of the fur trade vanished. Chicago's population now increasing in numbers by leaps and bounds, it became a veritable city within a

few months. During December, 1836, Fort Dearborn was finally evacuated by order of the U. S. Government. Construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was begun July 4, 1836, and finished, after a number of delays, April 16, 1848. No more was the Chicago Portage to see the canoe of the Indian, nor the *batteau* of the *voyageur* and fur-trader, and the old natural highway, that had so long linked civilization with the unknown, fell into disuse and was forgotten.

Chapter II

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND USE OF THE PORTAGE

In every region the physical conditions are of paramount importance. Nowhere is this better evidenced than in the relation of Chicago's growth to the physical character of the Chicago region. Chicago is situated on land that once underlay an ancient glacial lake of which Lake Michigan is the present-day survival.[11] The Valparaiso Moraine was its southerly boundary and through a notch in the moraine now called the Des Plaines Valley this lake had an outlet to the Illinois River Valley. Farther north the great glacier presented a solid front of ice across the continent. This lake passed through three successive stages or periods. During each period the water surface remained constant at a different level or elevation for a considerable period of time. Incident to each of these periods distinct systems of beaches were formed. For the greater part, these beaches exist to-day and indicate in each case the boundary of the lake area and the elevation of its surface. This subsidence of the lake surface is accounted for first, by the recession of the glacier; and second, by the lowering of the floor of the Des Plaines outlet or the removal of barriers in the outlet that withheld the flow.

During the Glenwood period, or highest stage, the surface of the water was about fifty-five feet above the present surface of Lake Michigan. The Calumet period,

[11] *Chicago Folio Geological Atlas, U. S. Geological Survey.* 1902.

which followed, was about twenty feet lower or thirty-five feet above the present level of Lake Michigan, and the Tolleston period, or third stage, was twenty feet above the present level of Lake Michigan. Throughout these three periods the outlet for the lake was down the Des Plaines Valley, the ice barrier preventing any outlet to the north.

The modern Des Plaines River in its present state includes what is called the Upper Des Plaines and the Lower Des Plaines. The Upper Des Plaines rises in a marsh near the boundary line separating Racine and Kenosha counties in Wisconsin and flows southward nearly parallel to and from eight to ten miles inland from Lake Michigan. The Lower Des Plaines is the continuation of the Upper Des Plaines from a point about two miles south of Riverside, Illinois, and flows southwesterly down the Des Plaines Valley or old glacial lake outlet. Throughout the three stages of the glacial lake only the "Upper Des Plaines"—in somewhat different state—was in existence and it flowed directly into the lake, the lake shore then being in the vicinity of Riverside.

The breaking of the ice barrier to the north and the consequent lowering of the lake from the Tolleston stage to the present Lake Michigan level caused a number of most important changes to occur. With the gradual lowering of the surface the flow of water down the old outlet through Des Plaines Valley diminished and finally ceased. As lowering further progressed the Chicago River was formed and there is every indication that the Des Plaines River flowed east along the old lake bottom through the Mud Lake depression and into Lake Michigan by way of the Chicago River during a considerable period of time. Then in some unknown way a barrier was raised across the channel near the

present line of Kedzie Avenue and prevented further flow in this direction. The Des Plaines then backed up, turned and flowed southwesterly down the old glacial lake outlet, leaving a slough or small lake about five miles long in the depression that had been its former outlet to Lake Michigan. This was called Mud or Portage Lake.

The Des Plaines River has a fall of fifteen feet from Riverside to the mouth of the creek that connected it with Mud Lake, a distance of two miles. From the mouth of this creek to Lemont, a distance of thirteen miles, the Des Plaines flows over the flat valley floor of the old outlet, through what was called the "twelve-mile level." The surface of Mud Lake and of this thirteen-mile portion of the Des Plaines was at the same level about nine feet above Lake Michigan. From Lemont to Joliet Pool, about three miles below Joliet, the Des Plaines in a distance of about sixteen miles falls to seventy-six feet below Lake Michigan level and from Joliet Pool to La Salle, Illinois, a distance of sixty miles, the fall is seventy feet or 146 feet below the level of Lake Michigan. From La Salle, Illinois, to the Mississippi River, a distance of 225 miles, the Illinois River has a total fall of about thirty-five feet. Below La Salle the river, except when closed by ice, is considered permanently navigable.

The barrier or ridge at Kedzie Avenue between Mud Lake and the Chicago River, as previously noted, was a part of the Continental Divide that extended from Lake Superior to New Brunswick, separating the headwaters of the streams flowing to the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, from those flowing to the Mississippi, the Ohio and the Atlantic Ocean. The crest of this ridge was ten and one-half feet above Lake Michigan, and the prairie west of it that contained the

Mud Lake depression was about eight feet above Lake Michigan.

The Chicago River, often called an "arm of Lake Michigan," when not frozen was always navigable. The river-bottom, except at the mouth of the river, lay at an average depth of twelve feet below the surface of Lake Michigan, the river surface being level with the surface of Lake Michigan. At the mouth of the river a sand-bar had formed over which the water flowed into the lake at a depth of two feet.

In all existing descriptions of the Chicago Portage there is a dearth of information concerning it in such form as will enable one to relocate it with precision. Concerning this Dr. M. M. Quaife makes the following statement:

> "The comparatively undeveloped state of the field of American historical research is well illustrated by the fact that despite the historical importance of the Chicago Portage, no careful study of it has ever been made. The student will seek in vain for even an adequate description of the physical characteristics of the portage." [12]

La Salle's description contained in a letter written by him in 1682 is the earliest and in many respects the best description of the Chicago Portage. It is as follows: [13]

" . . . . Having finished my *caches* I left the 28th December, and proceeded on foot to join the Sieur de Tonty, which I did the 6th January, the snows having detained me some days at the portage of Chicago.

"This is an isthmus which is 41 degrees 50 minutes elevation from the pole on the West of the Lake of the

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[12] *Chicago and the Old Northwest.* Quaife. (Chicago, 1913.) p. 3.

[13] Margry, Pierre. *Découvertes et établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale, 1614 to 1754, mémoires et documents originaux.* (Paris, 1876-1886.) 6 Vols. Vol. II, pp. 165-167.

Illinois [Lake Michigan] where one goes by a channel formed by the junction of several small streams or gullies of the prairie [the Chicago River]. It is navigable about two leagues to the edge of this prairie. Beyond this at a quarter of a league distant toward the west there is a little lake [Mud Lake] a league and a half in length which is divided in two by a beaver dam. From this lake issues a little stream which after twining in and out among the rushes for half a league falls into the Chicago River [the Des Plaines] and from there into the river of the Illinois. When this lake is full either from the great rains in summer or from the floods of the spring, it is discharged also into this channel which leads to the Lake of the Illinois [Lake Michigan] whose surface is seven feet lower than the prairie where is situated this lake.

"The River of Chicago [Des Plaines] does the same in the springtime when its channel is full. It discharges by this little lake a part of its water into the lake of the Illinois, and at this time should one make a little canal of a quarter of a league, says Joliet, from the lake to the basin which leads to the Illinois river, ships could in the summer enter into the river and descend into the sea. That might perhaps happen in the springtime but not in the summer, because there is not enough water in the river as far down at Fort St. Louis [Starved Rock] where the navigation of the Illinois River begins at this season and extends as far as the sea. It is true that there is still another difficulty which this ditch one would make could not remedy, it is this:

"The Lake of the Illinois always forms a sand bank at the entrance of the channel which leads to it. I doubt very much in spite of what anyone says whether this could be cleaned out or cleared away by the force of the current of the Chicago River [Des Plaines] when it was made to flow therein, since much greater cur-

rents in the same lake cannot do it. Moreover the utility of a canal would not be very great, for I doubt when everything should succeed if a boat could overcome the great flood which the currents cause in the Chicago [Des Plaines] in the springtime. These are much heavier than those in the Rhone. Again, navigation would be only for a short time at most for 15 or 20 days in the year after which there is no longer any water. What confirms me still further in the thought that the Chicago River [Des Plaines] could not clean the mouth of the channel [Chicago River] is that when the lake is filled with ice it blocks up the most navigable mouths. At this time and when ice is formed there is no longer water in the Chicago River [Des Plaines] to hinder blocking this channel with sand. Also I would not have made mention of this way of communication if Joliet had not proposed it without sufficiently examining the difficulties."

We note with intense interest in La Salle's description of the portage his record of its latitude, 41 degrees 50 minutes north. It is very probable that both he and Joliet took the latitude of the place, as Joliet's map of the Mississippi Valley region includes marginal records of latitude. This is also true of Marquette's map of the region. La Salle was probably at Fort Frontenac when Joliet passed through there on his return to Montreal and Quebec.[14] Joliet and La Salle may have met at this time and discussed Joliet's journey, reviewing his maps and notes, and La Salle at that time could have obtained the information from Joliet concerning the location and Joliet's idea as to the required length of a canal to connect the two great waterways of the

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[14] Eleanor Atkinson: *The Story of Chicago and National Development.* p. 12.

Andreas, A. T. *History of Chicago; From Earliest Period to Present Time.* (Chicago, 1884.) 3 Vols. Vol. I, p. 45.

continent. This record of the latitude should forever settle any question as to the location of the Chicago Portage. Parallel 41° 50′ crosses Kedzie Avenue near Thirty-third Street about 1,000 feet south of the center of Kedzie Avenue bridge.

Joliet and Marquette passed through the Chicago Portage some time in September, 1673. Unfortunately Joliet lost all his papers and barely escaped with his life when his canoe was overturned in the Lachine rapids of the St. Lawrence River just above Montreal. Father Marquette's journal, which is the only written record of their journey in existence, contains no detailed description of the trip through the Chicago Portage. It is in La Salle's description of the portage and in his reference to Joliet's statements concerning it which he had carefully and thoroughly investigated, and in Father Dablon's letter[15] quoting statements made by Joliet, that we obtain the detailed information on the condition of the Chicago Portage as it was when Joliet and Marquette passed across it.

We deduce from La Salle's account of Joliet's statements, and also from Father Dablon's letter, that a fairly rainy season had preceded the coming of Joliet and Marquette to the Chicago region, otherwise Joliet would not have found sufficient water in the Des Plaines and in Mud Lake to justify his decision that a quarter of a league (about three-quarters of a mile) was sufficient and proper for the length of a canal connecting the two great waterways. It will be well to note at this point a little difference in detail. Father Dablon's letter states that the canal proposed by Joliet was to be a "half a league" (about one and one-half miles) long; Father Marquette, also, in his report to his superiors, describing his first journey to the Mississippi, makes a similar statement as to its length as follows:

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[15] *Jesuit Relations.* Vol. 58, p. 105. Thwaites' Translation.

"We therefore reascend the Mississippi which gives us much trouble in breasting its currents. It is true that we leave it at about the 38th degree [north latitude] to enter another river, which greatly shortens our road, and takes us with little effort to the lake of the Illinois [Lake Michigan] . . . .

"In the spring and during part of the summer there is only one portage of half a league." [16] This was the portage at Chicago between the waterways. However, either length given would indicate a good navigable condition of both Mud Lake and the Des Plaines. In Father Marquette's journal of his second journey to the Chicago region, under date of March 31, 1675, is an entry which contains the statement: "Here we began our portage eighteen months ago." [17] This makes it very clear that he used the same route on both of his journeys.

Almost one hundred and thirty-five years after La Salle's account, namely, on March 4, 1817, Major Stephen H. Long made a report of which the following is an extract: [18]

"In the flat prairie above mentioned is a small lake about five miles in length and six to thirty or forty yards in width, communicating both with the River Desplaines and the Chicago River by means of a kind of canal which has been made partly by the current of the water, and partly by the French and Indians, for the purpose of getting their boats across in that direction in time of high waters. The distance from the river Desplaines to Chicago River by this water course is about nine miles, through the greater part of which there is more or less water, so that a portage is seldom

[16] *Jesuit Relations*. Vol. 59, pp. 161-164. Thwaites' Translation.

[17] *Jesuit Relations*. Vol. 59, pp. 165-183. Thwaites' Translation.

[18] State Papers, First Session, 16th Congress, Document No. 17. pp. 5-8.

more than three miles in the driest season; but in a wet season boats pass and repass with facility between the two rivers."

Graham and Philips, commissioners for the Government, who were sent to define the "Indian Boundary Line," also discussed the matter of improving navigation between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, in their report of April 4, 1819, wherein they describe the Chicago Portage as follows:[19]

"The route by the Chicago as followed by the French since the discovery of the Illinois presents at one season of the year an uninterrupted water communication for boats of six to eight tons burden between the Mississippi and the Michigan Lake. At another season, a portage of two miles, at another a portage of seven miles from the bend of the Plein (Des Plaines) to the arm of the Lake (Chicago River) at another, a portage of fifty miles, from the mouth of the Plein to the Lake, over which there is a well beaten wagon road and boats and their loads are hauled by oxen and vehicles kept for the purpose by the French at the Chicago."

The following interesting description is given in Justin Winsor's "The Mississippi Basin." [20]

"What Herman Moll, the English cartographer, called the 'land carriage of Chekakou' is described by James Logan in a communication which he made in 1718 to the English Board of Trade, as running from the lake three leagues up the river, then a half a league of carriage, then a mile of water, next a small carry, then two miles to the Illinois, and then one hundred and thirty leagues to the Mississippi. But descriptions varied with the seasons. It was usually called a carriage of from four to nine miles, according to the stage

[19] State Papers, First Session, 16th Congress, Document No. 17. pp. 8-10.

[20] *Mississippi Basin;* Winsor. p. 24.

of water. In dry seasons it was even farther, while in wet times it might not be more than a mile; and indeed, when the intervening lands were 'drowned,' it was quite possible to pass in a canoe amid the sedges from Lake Michigan to the Des Plaines, and so to the Illinois and the Mississippi."

There are quite a number of accounts by various persons who have passed over the Chicago Portage in addition to those previously given. Their experiences cover a wide range. Mud Lake is described as a swiftly running flood, as a slough too shallow for loaded boats, and in about every condition possible between these two extremes. These accounts form a most interesting chapter in Chicago's history.

The old Chicago Portage endured through three stages of usefulness. The first stage was its use by prehistoric man, the mound-builders and later by the Indians, who were here previous to the advent of the Europeans. In their migrations these people no doubt found the Chicago Portage in every way suited to their requirements. Their canoes were of light draught and a few inches of water would suffice for their use, so that even in the dry season only a very short occasional carry was necessary. After the coming of the white man the Indian learned he had a real asset in the furs of animals. Then began the second stage; that of the use of the Chicago Portage in the fur trade and by the missionaries and the early travelers.

Just so long as the fur trade remained in the hands of the itinerant traders, and there were a great many of these, the portage was ample for all their needs. The fur trade had its active seasons and they fitted in very well with the water conditions of the portage route so that even the large boats later brought into use by the great fur companies had no trouble at first. The hunting season began in the late fall and lasted well along

toward spring, when the trading and transportation season began. This activity had ceased by the summer or dry season. Later, when the great fur companies moved nearer the source of supply and established agency headquarters at Mackinac and Chicago, the fur gatherers and traders went farther into the country to get an earlier start and this was followed by a more delayed return. [21] It is not difficult to understand this development and what it ultimately led to, namely, the necessity of using the portage at all seasons and the attendant hardships. This is well illustrated in the accounts of several persons, especially that of Gurdon S. Hubbard. [22]

However, the portage served its purpose well and many hundreds of persons who have left us no written account of their trips passed over it time and again without trouble or inconvenience during this stage.

The coming of the agriculturists had the effect of driving the fur-bearing animals more or less rapidly from the region, so that the third stage of usefulness of the Chicago Portage is marked by its dual use to meet the increasing demands for transportation of products and supplies by the agriculturists and by the diminish-

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[21] The authors have had access to original manuscripts, notes and records of the American Fur Company now in the possession of The Chicago Historical Society. These papers contain many letters and reports that passed between those agents of the Company located in the outposts and the officials at the Company headquarters, and indicate the methods used in carrying on the fur trade and its development. An excellent account of the development of the fur trade and the manner in which it was carried on is given in *Illinois, in 1818,* by S. J. Buck, published by authority of the Illinois Centennial Commission, 1918. pp. 22-28.

[22] Henry E. Hamilton: *Incidents in the Life of Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard.* Autobiographical Sketch (MS). Collected from Personal Narratives and Other Sources, and Arranged by his Nephew, Henry E. Hamilton. (Chicago, 1888.) Contains a most interesting account of his journeys through the Chicago Portage. p. 29.

ing movement of furs. Wagons or boats were used as the season or convenience dictated. After the fur trade finally ceased, following the removal of the Indians from the region, the old water route fell into disuse, the agriculturists preferring to use wagons along the portage road for transportation purposes. However, the agitation begun by the fur-traders for the opening of a canal was kept up by their successors, the settlers, for the waterways furnished a most economical means of transportation.

Nothing was done in the way of improvement to facilitate the use of the portage route either by the Government or by private enterprise. In the period when the fur trade was growing and becoming commercialized, boats of increased size requiring greater depth of water for their navigation came into use.[23] The effect of this was to increase the length of the land carry, and as the unloading, reloading and transporting of a large boat and cargo was an unpleasant and time-consuming task the "portage road" was used with greater frequency and for longer distances.[24] A consequence of this was to broaden and develop the old portage paths and Indian trails into highways. These large boats had, however, been used to the extreme limit that conditions permitted, even to dragging or poling them through the fluid mud in preference to making a land carry.[25] In this

[23] The boats used in the fur trade were: The northern canoe, 35 ft. long, 6 ft. wide and capable of carrying four tons; the pirogues, manned by six to seven oars; the Mackinaw boat, forty or fifty feet long, twelve feet wide and three or four ft. depth of hold; the batteaux, thirty ft. long, eight ft. wide, and rowed with six oars; the Durham boat, sixty feet long, eight ft. wide, two ft. deep, had a capacity of fifteen tons and drew twenty inches of water. From testimony of Reuben Gold Thwaites given in case of United States of America *vs.* Economy Light & Power Co.; Abstract of Proofs, pp. 497-499.

[24] *Illinois in 1818.* S. Buck. p. 29.

[25] *Incidents and Events in the Life of Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard.* Henry E. Hamilton. p. 39.

manner the channel through Mud Lake was improved and a connection was established between Mud Lake and the Chicago River. In every other respect, until construction on the Illinois and Michigan Canal was started, the region remained the same as when fashioned by the hand of nature.

The "Chicago Portage Route" extended from the mouth of the Chicago River at Lake Michigan to the head of navigation on the Illinois River at La Salle. Although nominally in the portage route, the Chicago River was permanently navigable. All of that part of the water route subject to seasonal change was included between the head of navigation on the Chicago River and the head of navigation on the Illinois River.

In retracing the old Chicago Portage route, its relocation being the ultimate object of the authors of this paper, no difficulty is met with between Lake Michigan and South Leavitt Street, notwithstanding the fact that changes have been made in the Chicago River, its mouth being formerly near the intersection of Lake Street and Michigan Avenue. From the present Michigan Avenue bridge west to Leavitt Street the course of the present river encompasses all of that navigable segment of the portage route that was included between these points at the time of its discovery. The Des Plaines River of history has always been clearly defined, surveyed and platted; therefore, no difficulty is met with in tracing its original course from the source to its confluence with the Kankakee, forming the Illinois. This also is true concerning the course of the Illinois River to La Salle.

In the seven miles between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines lie both the "Old Chicago Portage," of half a league on the divide between the Chicago River and Mud Lake, and Mud or Portage Lake itself. This seven-mile stretch flanked in part by the old Tolleston Beach

was traversed at times entirely by water, at other times entirely by land and at still other times partially by land and partially by water.

Much confusion and uncertainty has existed as to the exact route taken by the discoverers, the explorers, the missionaries and traders, in making this traverse, as their descriptions were based upon varying conditions. In the final solution of the problem four, possibly five, routes must be recognized as follows:

(1) The route of the continuous waterway under most favorable conditions—from the head of navigation on the Chicago River through the ditch across the Continental Divide, through Mud Lake, to the exact place the Des Plaines was entered.

(2) The *actual* route of the short portage of "half a league," including the *precise points:* (a) of disembarkation from the Chicago River, and (b) of entrance into Mud or Portage Lake.

(3) The route of the long portage or land carry from the Chicago to the Des Plaines.

(4) The route from the Chicago to and across the Des Plaines, including the exact place where the Des Plaines was crossed or forded on the long land route down the Des Plaines Valley to the head of navigation on Illinois River.

(5) The extent of the portage on the south shore of Mud Lake to the Summit Ford.

Chapter III

THE OLD WATER ROUTE

Mud or Portage Lake no longer exists. It was included, roughly outlined, within the following boundaries: Kedzie Avenue on the east; Harlem Avenue on the west; Archer Avenue on the south, and a line parallel to and about a half-mile south of Ogden Avenue on the north. The exact boundaries will be given later.

The construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the railroads and a number of other changes and improvements so altered the appearance of the Mud Lake region that identification of the portage route was made difficult and its true location was a matter of dispute. For many years after the portage route had been abandoned the Des Plaines would still overflow to the east through the old Mud or Portage Lake outlet during the springtime and after a heavy rainfall. This condition prevented the erection of buildings and the construction of roads and sundry other improvements in the area subject to inundation. As a consequence much of the former contour of Mud Lake could be identified for a long period.

With the construction of the Sanitary Canal, completed January 17, 1900, an embankment or levee extending between Lyons and Summit was built across the entrance to the Des Plaines Valley. The Des Plaines River being diverted to a new channel to the west of this levee, all of its flow passed down the Des Plaines Valley, leaving Mud Lake dry for all time.

The danger of inundation being entirely removed, many industries have located in the old Mud Lake bot-

tom. Large buildings have been erected, streets have been cut through it, extensive tracts filled in, subdivisions laid out, and many homes have been built. Additional changes are rapidly proceeding. In three or four years at the most all the old landmarks will have been obliterated, and the old Chicago Portage that has been a determining factor in the history of civilization in the Old Northwest for the past two hundred and fifty years will be wiped out of existence.

Incidentally this state of affairs indicates the importance of prompt action if any of the early historical landmarks now existing are to be preserved.

Mud Lake, as its name implies, was for the most part a swamp or slough with relatively open channels extending through it. It was contained in a depression from one mile to two and one-half miles wide lying from two feet to sixteen feet below the adjoining prairie.[26] The east end of the lake was situated at about the present line of Albany Avenue and Thirty-first Street. From here the lake extended southwesterly. For the first four miles or to about the present line of Austin Avenue it had a varying width of from one-half to three-quarters of a mile. Beyond this place that part of Mud Lake lying between Austin Avenue and Harlem Avenue broadened to a considerable extent and contained an island about a mile long and a half-mile wide. The west end of Mud Lake connected with the Des Plaines

[26] Mud Lake was surveyed and platted by A. J. Mathewson in 1865. This map is in the possession of the Sanitary District of Chicago. The Government survey of 1821 has also been platted. It shows Mud Lake and the region between Lake Michigan and the mouth of the Des Plaines. The original is in the possession of the State of Illinois. A cartographer's map of Will, Kendall, Du Page and Cook counties, by Rees, shows the Mud Lake region as it was in 1852. The Sanitary District of Chicago has maps of a number of surveys of the Mud Lake region made by their own engineers. These are contour maps. Some of these maps show a contour interval as close as one foot.

through a little creek known as "Portage Creek." The junction of this creek with the Des Plaines was the "West end of the Portage."

The "Continental Divide" over which Joliet and Father Marquette conveyed their canoes in 1673 lay between Albany Avenue at Thirty-first Street and the junction of South Leavitt Street with the river, the latter location being its head of navigation. The present course of the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River lies along the line of the portage route they followed between these points. Later it was worn to a small channel or ditch by the Indians and the voyagers dragging their boats across the divide,[27] and in 1852 it was deepened and widened by the Cook County Drainage Commission. This had the effect of draining Mud Lake into the Chicago River. The surface of the present river here is from ten to eleven feet lower than the old portage path.

From Albany Avenue and Thirty-first Street west to the island there was a single channel only through Mud Lake. This original channel followed very closely the line of the present river from Albany Avenue westerly to where it crosses the line of Central Avenue about two hundred feet south of West Thirty-ninth Street. Here the original channel left the course of the present river and turned due southwest to the east end of the island which is situated just west of the center of Sec. 5, T. 38 North, 13 East or what would be the intersection of

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[27] Major Stephen H. Long. American State Papers, First Session, 16th Congress, Document No. 17, p. 6: "Report to Acting Secretary of War, George Graham, on his Expedition of 1816;" *The National Register* for March 29, 1817, pp. 193-198, inclusive. A map of the route of the expedition accompanies this report.

Graham and Philips. Report on the Region Included Within the Boundary Lines of the Indian Treaty of St. Louis, August, 1816. American State Papers, First Session, 16th Congress, Document No. 17, pp. 8-10, inclusive. Captain Sullivan's map accompanies this report.

South Austin Avenue produced south, and West Forty-third Street produced west. There were two channels from here to the west end of the island, their confluence forming the "Little Creek" which connected with the Des Plaines.

North of the island the northerly channel, or "North Arm of Mud Lake," extended westerly from the point described in a generally straight direction to its junction with the creek. The "South Arm" formed an almost complete semicircle and took a long bend south of the island as far as the line of West Fifty-first Street, which it followed in a general way between Ridgeland Avenue and Oak Park Avenue, then turned northwesterly to its junction with the "North Arm" and the little creek which occurred about 700 or 800 feet east of the Des Plaines. When Mud Lake was in a normal stage the more direct and shorter route by the north channel was used in crossing the portage. This was the little stream that twined in and out among the rushes for half a league and fell into the Des Plaines as described by La Salle.[28] The channel in the south arm, however, was the deeper one and when the dry season became acute it could be used for some time after the North Channel became too shallow for general use.

The confluence of the north and south arms of Mud Lake, forming the little creek, occurred between 400 and 500 feet east of the line of Harlem Avenue about 200 to 300 feet north of the line of West Forty-ninth Street produced west. From this point the course of the little creek, the outlet of the Mud Lake, called "Portage Creek," continues westerly bearing slightly south to the Des Plaines River, a total distance of about 700 to 800 feet.

The Ogden Dam is built squarely across "Portage Creek" at Harlem Avenue. It is remarkable that the

[28] La Salle's letter of 1682: Margry, Vol. II, p. 166.

part of the creek west of Ogden Dam, about 300 feet in extent, is almost exactly the same in appearance today as it was when, 255 years ago, Joliet and Marquette paddled through it from the Des Plaines to Mud Lake and a little later obtained their first glimpse of the site of Chicago. It was thus when La Salle, Tonty and the countless numbers of Indians, soldiers, missionaries, explorers, fur-traders and voyagers used this historic thoroughfare and because of that fact it should be known to every student of the Chicago region.

From the intersection of West Thirty-ninth Street and South Central Avenue the present "Ogden Ditch" follows the original course of the old channel through the north arm of Mud Lake in a general way as far as the point where the ditch is crossed by the Santa Fé Railroad right-of-way. This ditch, however, runs in a straight line. The old channel course bore a little farther to the south and at Austin Avenue was one-fourth of a mile south of the present ditch. From this point at Austin Avenue the "North Arm" of Mud Lake bore westerly and again joined and followed for a short distance what is now the line of Ogden Ditch in the vicinity of Oak Park Avenue, continuing from here, as previously stated, in a direct line to the little creek.

The Nickerson Ditch follows the ancient course of the main channel of Mud Lake from Central Avenue and West Thirty-ninth Street to Austin Avenue and West Forty-third Street as before noted, from which point it continues following the "South Arm" of Mud Lake as far as the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Here the ditch leaves the course of the south arm and turns just north of the Canal, running southwesterly for about a mile parallel to the Canal. The ditch again turns at this point and resumes the old course of the south arm to the Portage Creek. The Illinois and Michigan Canal and later the Sanitary Canal were built

across the "South Arm" of Mud Lake, each intersecting it in two places, thus cutting off and isolating about one-half of its length to the south of these improvements. That part of the "South Arm" as cut off can still be seen in the old Mud Lake bottom north of Archer Avenue to the south of the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

The Ogden and Nickerson ditches were excavated to drain the west portion of the Mud Lake region and though originally of modest dimensions the flow of water in a few years greatly increased their width and depth, as also happened to the channel across the Continental Divide, causing the "Upper Des Plaines" River in low water to turn east and become entirely tributary to the Chicago River and Lake Michigan as it was during the post-Tolleston period.

The Ogden Dam was built by the city of Chicago in the winter of 1876-77. Its crest was about one foot higher than the old Continental Divide, the effect of this being to move the Divide west to the location of Ogden Dam, to cause the Upper Des Plaines again to flow down the valley, and to lengthen the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River more than six miles.

A most important contribution to the study of the Chicago Portage is the data compiled by the late Mr. Lyman E. Cooley, Chief Engineer of the Sanitary District of Chicago, who made daily gaugings of the Des Plaines over a period of twenty years (1887-1910).[29] Mr. Cooley took readings at the Riverside Dam and from these estimated the height of water at the Ogden Dam and the Continental Divide. He also estimated the average period in days per year that the water remained at these levels.

By means of Mr. Cooley's most valuable data, together with the contour maps of the U. S. Geological

[29] Testimony of Lyman E. Cooley, pp. 556, 557, in Abstract of Proofs case of United States of America *vs.* Economy Light & Power Co.

Survey and the accounts of persons who had passed over the portage, quite a number of most interesting facts are deduced, the most important of these being as follows:

During an extremely long dry season the water in the Des Plaines would become quite low, or, as one traveler states, "It became a succession of pools connected by shallow currents." [30] Nevertheless, it was navigable for a much longer period of time than was Mud Lake.

There were times of extremely high water and swift current, often with much floating ice, during which it was impossible to use the water route. This condition is estimated to average 3.95 days per year, there being at that time four to five feet of water going over the Continental Divide into the Chicago River at Kedzie Avenue.

At other times it was possible to go by water for the entire distance from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi in boats drawing fifteen inches of water. This condition endured forty-eight days per year.

Again, when using boats drawing fifteen inches of water, it was necessary to make a portage of about one mile between Leavitt Street and Albany Avenue. This time is estimated to be twenty-six additional days. During this period the water in Mud Lake was level with the crest of the Continental Divide near Kedzie Avenue, and if a ditch through the divide was in existence the water would flow through it at a depth conforming to the depth of the ditch and also allow the uninter-

[30] *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley, Comprising Observations on its Mineral Geography, Internal Resources, and Aboriginal Population: Henry R. Schoolcraft.* (New York, 1825.)

Personal Memories of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontier, with Brief Notices of Passing Events, Facts, and Opinions. A. D. 1812-1842. Schoolcraft. (Philadelphia, 1851.)

Shea: *Early Voyages,* etc. pp. 50, 51.

rupted passage for a greater length of time of boats whose draught did not exceed the depth of the ditch.

At other times, still considering the use of boats drawing fifteen inches of water, it was necessary to make a portage of one and one-half miles between the head of navigation on the Chicago River at South Leavitt Street and deep water in Mud Lake, thence by way of Mud Lake to the vicinity of Central Avenue and Thirty-ninth Street. Here the south arm must be followed or a second portage made along the north bank of Mud Lake from this point to the Des Plaines. This is the portage condition as noted by Major Long. The time of this stage averaged forty-four additional days and Mr. Cooley's data shows that the water in the Des Plaines would, during this period, allow the passage of boats drawing twenty inches of water as far as l'Ile de la Cache (about eighteen miles). Below l'Ile de la Cache boats drawing fifteen inches of water could be used. During this period boats drawing eight inches or less could go through the north arm of Mud Lake.

As the dry season advanced a short carry or portage from the main channel near Thirty-ninth Street and Central Avenue to the south arm was necessary, and as the dry season further advanced it would be necessary to leave the south arm at the Point of Oaks, near Fifty-first Street and Oak Park Avenue and make a portage along the south shore of Mud Lake and along Tolleston Beach to the point where the Summit bridge crosses the Des Plaines. On occasions such as these, however, the route most used was a portage from Leavitt Street directly along the north bank of Mud Lake to the Des Plaines, a distance of about seven miles. Boats drawing fifteen inches of water are considered in the last statement. Boats drawing five to eight inches of water could pass through the south arm to the Des Plaines after a short portage to the south arm. This condition endured

for 103 days more. For the remaining 150 days of the year the water route through Mud Lake was either very shallow or closed by ice. The Des Plaines, however, remained navigable for a considerable part of this time for boats of light draught as far as La Salle, Illinois.

About 800 feet northwest of the mouth of Portage Creek is the southern end of an island in the Des Plaines River. This island, sometimes called Prescott's Island, is about one-half of a mile in length and at its widest part is less than one-fourth of a mile across. The opposite or northern end of this island is just below the place where the Upper Des Plaines cuts through the old Tolleston Beach. The river channel east of the island, together with part of the westerly channel and all of that part of the main channel between the southerly end of the island and a point near Summit has been cut off by the erection of a dam or levee that extends across the entrance to the Des Plaines Valley. The top of this dam is level with the old Tolleston ridge with which it is joined at the north end.

The flow of the Des Plaines River has been diverted through the westerly channel which has been extended by a supplementary artificial channel again to connect with the main stream just west of where the dam crosses the Des Plaines near Summit. The levee or dam, which is two miles long, effectively prevents the Des Plaines from sending any part of its flow through the old Mud Lake outlet to Lake Michigan. This diversion has had the further effect of keeping the water in the abandoned part of the river very low, but there is enough water in it at all times to demonstrate its true course as well as to make evident the junction of "Portage Creek" with the Des Plaines. In a number of other places down the valley below Summit the Des Plaines has been moved north to facilitate the construction of

the Illinois and Michigan Canal and later the Sanitary Canal, but the original course of the old water route to La Salle, having been surveyed and platted, is a matter of indisputable record.

Chapter IV

THE OLD LAND ROUTE AND ITS FORDING PLACE

As has been stated there were times when those who journeyed by the Chicago route found it necessary to make a land carry by way of the Portage Road for the whole distance between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines, for the reason that Mud Lake became unnavigable earlier in the year than did the Des Plaines.

Certain maps of the Government survey of the Mud Lake region made in the year 1821 show the old Portage Road running just north of Mud Lake and extending from about the present line of Western Avenue to a point just west of Harlem Avenue. Between Western Avenue and South Forty-sixth or Kolmar Avenue this road in some places lay over ground but one to two feet higher than Mud Lake. No evidence of that particular segment of the Portage Road is now in existence; the last fragment, a piece about 400 feet in length, extended between South California Boulevard and Washtenaw Avenue and lay about 175 feet north of and parallel to the west fork of the south branch. It was coextensive with "Lumber Street," which was vacated and closed February 22, 1902. At Kolmar Avenue the old Tolleston Beach turned in from the northeast and the Portage Road as platted is shown running along the slope of the beach and ending apparently at a point just beyond Harlem Avenue. This part of the road was from eight to ten feet above Mud Lake. Traces of this part of the old road were still to be seen as late as the year 1921.

There seem to be no authentic maps in existence giving first-hand information showing the location and direction of the Portage Road between Harlem Avenue and any terminal point along the Des Plaines River where a place of embarkation might be located. Undoubtedly, however, the continuation of this road to the end of the Portage between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines turned southwesterly from about the point described near Harlem Avenue and continued from there to the east bank of the Des Plaines at the north side of Portage Creek. This is evident from the notes of a survey made by John Walls, August 30, 1821, and recorded in Government Surveys Field Book Vol. 252, Page 138. The notation is as follows:

"West on a true line between Sections 1 and 12, T. 38 N., 12 E.

"Ch. Lk.

"8.75 The Portage Road runs northeast and southwest."

This means that the Portage Road crossed what is now the section line known in Chicago as West Forty-seventh Street in a northeast and southwest direction at a point 577.5 feet west of the center line of Harlem Avenue.

That the west end of the Portage Road from the Chicago River to the Des Plaines terminated near the mouth of Portage Creek is a most reasonable conclusion, for here the channels from both sides of the island in the Des Plaines merged into a single channel which carried down nearly the entire volume of water from above, making it an advantageous place to resume the water route. Also, the point on West Forty-seventh Street, as noted in the Walls survey, is on a direct line and is midway between the platted road end at Harlem Avenue and the mouth of Portage Creek.

This road from Harlem Avenue to the end of the Portage did not lead to the ford of the Des Plaines, however, for conditions in the Des Plaines about the mouth of Portage Creek are such as would not facilitate fording at that place. The river there is comparatively deep from a number of natural causes and in addition a broad marsh intervenes on the west or opposite side, constituting a formidable barrier to travel between the Des Plaines and the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet road in Lyons.

There were times also when Mud Lake was practically dry and the water in the Des Plaines itself became so low as to make it practically unnavigable. This necessitated a very long land carry. Early accounts state that often it was necessary to make a portage of fifty miles to the mouth of the Des Plaines and at other times it was even necessary to portage the whole distance of 100 miles between the Chicago River and the head of navigation on the Illinois. La Salle himself is one of those who made this statement. In an extract from one of his letters he is quoted as follows:

"The Chicago River [the Des Plaines] is not navigable for canoes except after this flood. The waters are always drained in the month of March so that it would be easier to transport by land the goods from Ft. St. Louis [Starved Rock] to the lake, making use of horses which it is easy to procure there." [31]

The route of this long portage road which La Salle's statement would indicate was in existence during his time and was probably used, in part, at least, by him and his expedition in the winter of 1681-1682 on their journey of discovery to the mouth of the Mississippi River, follows the route we have become familiar with by previous description as far as Harlem Avenue. A little more than a mile west of Harlem Avenue, namely at

[31] Margry. Vol. II, p. 168.

what is now Joliet Avenue and West Forty-Seventh street in Lyons, the Joliet Road begins. Extending in a southwesterly direction and passing through the towns of Joliet, Channahon, Morris, Seneca, Marseilles, Ottawa and Utica, it follows very nearly the line of the old portage road to La Salle and is the route mentioned in the narratives of a number of persons who used the long portage in the early days.[32]

Between Harlem Avenue at the point previously noted and the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons there is no connecting road in existence to-day. The greater part of the intervening territory is now included in one of the Cook County Forest Preserves. The Des Plaines River runs about midway between these two points. Its course is from north to south. The location of the old road that formerly connected these points and the exact location of the fording place where it crossed the Des Plaines have been the subject of much conjecture.

In the search for all available data that would tend to throw light upon this significant subject, two maps made within the last twenty-five years, purporting to show the route of the Portage Road between Harlem Avenue and the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons, were found. One of these shows the portage road crossing the Des Plaines at Riverside,[33] and another one locates it at Stony Ford.[34] Still another authority states that

[32] Schoolcraft: *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley,* etc. pp. 318-333.

Shea: *Early Voyages,* etc. pp. 50-54.

State Papers, 16th Congress: Graham and Philips, Document 17, p. 10.

Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner, pp. 256-259.

[33] Carl Dilg: *(MS.)* Map in the files of the Chicago Historical Society.

[34] Albert F. Scharf: *(MSS.)* Maps in the files of the Chicago Historical Society.

the crossing was at Ogden Avenue.[35] These maps and statement in regard to the location of the road and the ford seem to have been based largely on conjecture.

We must not overlook the fact that there was also a portage along the south side of Mud Lake. It was about two miles in length from its beginning at the eastern extremity of a wooded point situated about 200 feet east of the intersection of Fifty-Second Street and Oak Park Avenue, to its termination at the Summit Ford. This portage path was along a segment of the great continental trail that came from the east around the southern end of Lake Michigan and whose route followed the old ridges of the Calumet and Tolleston beaches, to the Summit Ford. The south portage path also made connection with the trail that followed the west bank of the north and south branches of the Chicago River, to and along the north bank of the west fork of the south branch. This trail turned south just east of Kedzie Avenue, passing between the head of the river and Mud Lake on the Continental Divide. Continuing south to about the vicinity of present Archer Avenue, it turned west along the south shore of Mud Lake to Summit. Here it turned north to the Des Plaines, which was forded where the Summit bridge now crosses.[36] It was

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[35] *"The Diversion of the Waters of the Great Lakes by Way of the Sanitary and Ship Canal of Chicago."* Lyman E. Cooley. A Chicago Sanitary District Publication, February, 1913, p. 13. "The Des Plaines was meandered up to the Township line at Lyons where the fifty-mile road mentioned by Graham and Philips crosses the river." (Ogden Ave. crosses the river at this point.)

[36] The present Elston Avenue follows very nearly the line of this old trail to a point about 600 feet south of present Division Street. From here it extended to and along the present Dix Street and continued at about the present right of way of the Chicago & North Western Ry., the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, and West Water Street to the west end of Lake Street Bridge. From this point it is platted on Harrison and Guion's map. A branch of the trail is shown

a relatively easy matter to trace the course of this trail along the Continental Divide near Kedzie Avenue and around the southeastern end of Mud Lake and along the south shore of Mud Lake to the Summit Ford. In 1900 many places of its course could be plainly seen. Even to-day traces of the old trail are visible between Cicero Avenue and Summit.

The only documentary evidence that we have been able to find of the existence and location of a portage path on the south bank is shown on two maps. One of these was made by Harrison and Guion for the United States Government in 1829 and shows the trail extending from the "Forks" at Lake Street along the river a short distance back from the bank, with branches running down to the river at "Lee's Place," at "Galloways" and at "Lawton's first trading house," the main trail turning south on the Continental Divide and ending about West Thirty-Fifth Street one-fourth of a mile west of Kedzie Avenue. This particular map does not take in much territory beyond that point.

The other map showing the South Portage was made by Mr. A. J. Mathewson in 1847 for the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commissioners. It was introduced in evidence in the case of The People of the State of Illinois *ex rel versus* the Economy Light and Power Company, and was referred to as "Orr Exhibit 3." The original is in the possession of the Canal Commissioners of the State of Illinois and a photostat copy is in the hands of the authors. This map shows sections 7and 8, Tp. 38 north 13 east and Section 12, Tp. 38 north 12 east. That is to say, the area bounded by Forty-Seventh Street, Fifty-First Street, Central Avenue and Joliet Avenue (in Lyons). It includes the south arm of

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to extend to about 35th Street. A little farther along the trail joins the old Continental Trail that ran along the Tolleston Beach ridge to the Summit Ford.

Mud Lake and the territory a little distance south of this. The road or trail south of Mud Lake is platted from Central Avenue west to Harlem Avenue and from the Summit Ford east for one-half mile. There is a gap for one-half mile between there and Harlem Avenue, but the town of Summit covers half of it and when the survey was made the trail must have been wholly or partially vacated across the said gap. Incidentally a most interesting detail on the map is the platting of the meander of the Des Plaines made by John Walls, United States Surveyor in 1821, for such part of the river as the map includes. The use of this old trail on the south side of Mud Lake as a portage in the manner outlined was inconsequential, especially with regard to the movements of the fur-traders and hunters, the missionaries and the travelers. This is evidenced by the Sullivan survey, as will be shown later.

The Des Plaines River between the present sites of Riverside and Summit, with the immediately adjacent territory, was one of the most important locations—if not the most important—in early North America. The best route connecting the St. Lawrence and Mississippi waterways passed through here. Here was the gateway to the Illinois Valley, and here was the focal point where the most traveled Indian trails merged before passing down the valley. These trails followed along ridges of the beaches formed by the various stages of ancient "glacial Lake Chicago" which had its outlet here. Three of these beaches radiated from this place to the northeast and to the southeast. Along them respectively ran the main trails from the Lake Superior region and the Continental trails that passed along the southern edge of Lake Michigan from the east. A good many Indian villages were situated in this immediate vicinity. It was an ideal location for them and it is well to remember in this connection that the old trails

wherever possible avoid the dry, treeless prairies, and that the Indian villages and the haunts of fur-bearing animals are always found close to the watercourses and timber lands.

A comprehensive study of the physical characteristics of the Chicago River, Mud Lake and the Des Plaines River valley region has been made by the authors during the past eleven years. The ground has been gone over time and again, choosing such seasons as would facilitate both accessibility and observation, taking advantage of both frosty and extremely dry seasons to travel over ground ordinarily very difficult to reach. In this way a check was made on much of our documentary evidence, and this study forms the basis of the following statement:

The Mud Lake depression for its westerly portion is included between the north and south ridges of the old Tolleston Beach where they converge at the beginning of the outlet of glacial Lake Chicago down the Des Plaines Valley. East of the places where the Tolleston Beach ridges turn to the northeast and to the southeast the depression before noted was formed in the old Lake Chicago bottom after the ancient lake's recession, probably by the Des Plaines having carved at one time an outlet at that place. The Continental Divide in the vicinity of Kedzie Avenue formed the eastern margin of Mud Lake. Its western limit was a relatively low ridge that extended from the north line of the Tolleston Beach at West Forty-fourth Street to the south line of the Tolleston Beach at Summit and separated Mud Lake from the Des Plaines. There was one notch in this ridge. It formed Portage Creek, which was the only connection between Mud Lake and the Des Plaines. A broad land-locked marsh lay to the west of the Des Plaines and extended nearly parallel to the river from the north Tolleston Beach ridge to a point opposite Summit.

The Continental Divide at Kedzie Avenue, lying between the easterly end of Mud Lake and the head waters of the Chicago River, was the only place extant between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi where it was possible to cross by land in passing from the region north of the Chicago River, Mud Lake, the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers to the region lying to the south of them. There was a fording place across the sand-bar at the mouth of the Chicago River, but it was impossible to ford the river at any other place along its entire length between Lake Michigan and the Continental Divide. It also was impossible to ford or similarly cross through Mud Lake at any place.

The ridge that lay between Mud Lake and the Des Plaines was somewhat higher for that part of it north of Portage Creek than was the part between Portage Creek and Summit, and was passable for foot travel the greater part of the season. South from Portage Creek the ridge was somewhat narrow in places and although the channel of the Des Plaines is relatively deep and open, with its banks sharply defined, the ridge for some of its extent is inclined to be marshy and there are places that are at times practically impassable. For anyone desiring to cross from the trail or road that ran along the south bank of Mud Lake and the Des Plaines to the road on the north bank, it would be necessary to use the Continental Divide, there being as above noted no other crossing in existence. Seven miles west of the Continental Divide was the Summit Ford; here the Des Plaines runs east and west, and if, for example, the objective point was one along the north bank of Mud Lake it would be necessary after crossing Summit Ford to travel some distance north, then turn east and recross the Des Plaines somewhere to the north of the north shore line of Mud Lake.

There were four fording places in this locality. One of them was situated at Riverside, on the Barry Point Road where the present bridge crosses the Des Plaines just below the dam. Another one called "Stony Ford" is situated where West Forty-second Street produced west would cross the Des Plaines about 150 feet south of the new highway bridge across the Des Plaines on State Auto Route No. 4. A third, "Laughton's Ford," is three-eighths of a mile farther south, at the head of the island where the Des Plaines cuts through the Tolleston Beach, and the fourth one, "Summit Ford," was just above the bridge at Summit.

Originally each one of these fords carried an Indian trail across the Des Plaines. The Green Bay trail that ran near the shore of Lake Michigan and crossed the Chicago River on the sand-bar at its mouth had an intercepting trail that left the Green Bay trail near Gross Point and continued along the Calumet Beach through Niles Center, Jefferson Park, Cragin, Austin and Riverside. At Riverside this trail divided. One branch, crossing the Des Plaines at the Riverside Ford just below the present dam, was later known as the Barry Point Road. Its course continued westerly through Fullersburg, Downer's Grove, and Naperville. The other branch of the same trail continued from Riverside along the east side of the Des Plaines to "Stony Ford." Here it crossed the Des Plaines and ran southwest for about three-fourths of a mile, where it merged into a great trail that ran down the Des Plaines and Illinois valleys north of the river, later the Chicago-Joliet Road.

The Summit Ford was the crossing place of a main trail that followed along the Calumet and Tolleston beaches that extended from the southeast around the lower end of Lake Michigan. Beyond the ford at Summit this trail ran northerly and forked, one branch join-

ing the great trail down the Des Plaines Valley, the other running north to the ford at the Riverside Dam; here, just before the ford was reached, this branch also forked, one part joining the trail through Fullersburg, Downer's Grove and Naperville, the other merging with the Barry Point Road, which crossed the Des Plaines at the Riverside Ford. Not less than two other main trails merged at Summit south of the Des Plaines and used the Summit Ford.

Regarding Laughton's Ford we had at first no information of any kind as to the existence of a fording place at this location. For many reasons we were unable to reconcile our minds to the prevalent idea that either the Summit Ford or the Riverside Ford was the place where the long Portage Road crossed the Des Plaines. By the simple expedient of following along the sandy slope of the old Tolleston Beach from the intersection of Central Avenue and West Thirty-ninth Street, westward to the Des Plaines, then making another start from the corner of West Forty-seventh Street and Joliet Avenue in Lyons and following the old beach eastward to the river, we became convinced that the true ford was situated at the place where the line of the Tolleston Beach crossed the Des Plaines. Feeling that the physical evidence was complete, we began our search for documentary evidence. We have, thus far, been unable to find any written matter or data compiled by an historian or archeologist naming or locating this fording place; however, we did find that at least two maps of old official surveys located it definitely, and that two other maps, while not attempting to give its location precisely, are quite accurate in indicating its location.

The search revealed also, it may be stated, that only one investigator, Mr. Albert F. Scharf, has ever located the old "Stony Ford," which is situated farther north

between Laughton's Ford and Riverside Ford. With this single exception all writers on the subject of the Chicago Portage have selected either Riverside or Summit as the location of the fording place where the Portage Road crossed the Des Plaines. This is due probably to the fact that Ogden Avenue, which was laid out in the early thirties, and Archer Avenue, completed in 1836, deflected the traffic from the Portage Road that lay north of Mud Lake. Through disuse nearly all trace of it became obliterated, and as those persons who used Ogden Avenue or Archer Avenue had very little in common with those who had used the Portage Road, no memory as to the location of the Portage Road has survived.

Laughton's Ford was unquestionably the true crossing or fording place where the historic portage road or trail, which began at the Chicago River and ran along the North Shore of Mud Lake, crossed the Des Plaines. From Laughton's Ford the Portage Road or trail ran southwesterly along the Tolleston Beach ridge to its junction with what is now the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons, and which to-day very nearly follows the continuation of the main trail or road down the Des Plaines Valley and the Illinois Valley to La Salle, Illinois.

Chapter V

THE EVIDENCE OF EARLY SURVEYS AS TO THE TRUE PORTAGE ROUTE

The first maps of this region are those made by Joliet and Father Marquette. Some historians have stated that these maps were made by the Jesuits previous to their coming to the region, being based on data given them by the Indians.[37] If this is a fact the maps were probably revised and re-checked during or after their journey, for they contain marginal notations of the latitude of the principal points visited, which it is reasonable to believe were not furnished by the Indians nor by anyone other than the explorers themselves.

A number of maps of the Illinois region, showing in a general way the route of the Chicago Portage, were made later by others. These form a most interesting series, and can be grouped into three divisions, as follows: Maps made by persons who had actually been over the Chicago Portage; early maps made from de-

[37] Dr. Louise P. Kellogg, for many years assistant to Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites, is the author of an article in "Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at its 44th Annual Meeting held October 18, 1906," entitled, *"Marquette's Authentic Map Possibly Identified."* pp. 183-193. Dr. Kellogg has made a very careful study of the map attributed to Marquette, first published in Shea's volume on the discovery of the Mississippi, and of the map published by Thévenot in 1681, and has come to the conclusion that the Thévenot map is the true map made by Marquette after his and Joliet's journey, and that the map published by Shea was made previous to that journey.

Parkman, in *"La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West,"* holds a contrary opinion (p. 65, 1907 edition). In the appendix (pp. 451-453) he discusses these two maps, and also the two maps attributed to Joliet.

scriptions of the Portage given to the map-maker by a person who had traversed it; and more recent maps based on plats of an actual survey or on a number of surveys and made by a map-maker. This, however, does not include survey plats made by the surveyor.

There were, moreover, three periods in the existence of the Chicago Portage, each having its influence on the making of maps. The first includes the time from the discovery of the portage by white men in 1673 until the French were driven out by the Indians about the year 1700. During the greater part of this period there was little or no interference with persons using the portage.

The second period has been called the "Dark Age of Chicago." It lasted nearly one hundred years, or from about 1700 until the negotiation of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The portage was practically closed by hostile Indians against its use by the white man all of this time. It is true that a number of persons passed through it, but this use was only occasional, and conditions during this period did not facilitate study or the making of maps.

When the Treaty of Greenville reopened the portage the third period began, and with the establishment of Fort Dearborn its use became intensive. A sad interruption occurred from the time of the massacre in August, 1812, until the building of the new Fort Dearborn in 1816. With the exception of that time, the Chicago Portage route was continuously open until it was abandoned.

It seems a long step from La Salle's colony to the Treaty of Greenville, but sufficient evidence accumulated during the French occupation, 1673 to 1700, to identify the route of Joliet and Father Marquette as the very one through the Mud Lake region that was later acquired by the Treaty of Greenville, and used by the fur-traders until 1836.

The Marquette map published in 1681 by Thévenot and thought by some to be the most authoritative delineation of the Joliet-Marquette route, shows remarkable similarity to the Government survey map of 1821 with regard to the region between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines. The main channel and the north and south branches of the Chicago River are shown with astonishing fidelity. No less correctly is shown the course of the Des Plaines. Mud Lake also is shown in its proper relative position between them and is indicated by the word "Portage." This is convincing evidence that the actual route of the portage traversed by Joliet and Father Marquette was through the Mud Lake region.

La Salle's letter of 1682, giving the latitude of the place where Joliet proposed to cut a canal across the Continental Divide, accurately fixes the location of the portage made by Joliet and Father Marquette in September, 1673, at 41° 50′ north latitude.

This parallel is given on the map of survey prepared by the Sanitary District of Chicago in 1904 as lying 800 feet south of the middle of the bridge over the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River at Kedzie Avenue. The Chicago Folio, Geologic Atlas of United States Geological Survey, 1902, plats this parallel 300 feet farther south or 1100 feet south of the middle of the bridge.

La Salle's observation of latitude is the very first scientific citation given in any early description of the "half a league of prairie" that comprised the portage. His record gives us the means of re-locating it at any time, by simply ascending the Chicago River for "about two leagues," the equivalent of six miles, and then in the prairie beyond locating parallel 41° 50′ north latitude.

This location as established by La Salle is proof positive that Joliet and Father Marquette in making the

traverse between the Des Plaines and Lake Michigan passed through Mud Lake and the Chicago River. This, then, is the principal fact to decide. There is ample proof, or rather there is no occasion to doubt the existence of a well-traveled portage between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines through the Mud Lake region. The main question is, did Joliet and Father Marquette use that portage or some other portage? Thévenot's map and La Salle's record of its latitude answer the question fully and finally.

Discussion of other early maps is omitted here. In a general way they all with more or less detail corroborate the location of the Chicago Portage as being through the Mud Lake region, but generally are more sketchy than accurate in their illustration of it.[38]

When accumulated evidence had forced the conclusion that the old Portage route was through the Mud Lake region we found it quite possible to go over the ground and visualize its appearance as in nature and to trace precisely the lines of least resistance which certainly must have been followed in making the traverse, but the cartographer's maps are not sufficient for complete and detailed verification of the portage as being along any particular channel or path. They simply indicate that the Portage was between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines.

The early surveys made in this region when it was untouched by man's arts or improvements are the sources that we must look to for such exact data and verification. A surveyor's note-book is a running story of his progress through a region, with notations accurately locating natural landmarks and other places

[38] Maps of Joliet, 1674; Lahontan, 1703; Moll, 1720; Popple, 1733; D'Anville, 1755; Mitchell, 1755; Du Pratz, 1757; Charlevoix, 1744; Hutchins, 1778; Andrews, 1782; General William Hull, 1812, etc.

passed by him. By use of his notes and the plat of survey that usually accompanies the notes we can locate every spot he may mention.

Surveys are generally begun at some permanent easily identified natural landmark, and all subsequent features met with during the survey are so noted that later if one is found the others may be easily located.

A number of early surveys of the Chicago region when practically natural conditions prevailed are of record and we have made use of them to corroborate our deductions and conclusions. Major Stephen H. Long, of the United States Army, made a map now in the files of the Topographical Bureau, United States Engineers Department at Washington, D. C., on which the route of his expedition to the Mississippi in 1816 is indicated by lines and the words: "Track of S. H. Long, Major of Topographical Engineers, in October, 1816." A meander of the lower end of Lake Michigan from the site of Michigan City, Indiana, to Fort Dearborn is included also, and from Fort Dearborn the "track" or route is shown extending to and across the Des Plaines and down the Des Plaines and Illinois valley. The report of this expedition is to be found in the *National Register* for March 29, 1817, Vol. 3, pages 193-198. Major Long's description of the Chicago Portage given previously is taken from that report.

The platted location of the "track" or route of the Long expedition is the record of the *first survey ever made in this region.* From the time La Salle observed the latitude of the Chicago Portage until Major Long's map was made, no records of actual measurements or data of a scientific nature accompany any contemporary maps or descriptions of the Portage. Major Long's description and his map show plainly that the historic Chicago Portage was through the Mud Lake region, that the Portage Road ran along the north shore of

Mud Lake and that the ford of the Des Plaines was not located at Riverside or Summit.

The boundary lines of the territory ceded by the St. Louis Treaty of August 24, 1816, was the subject of the second official survey made in the Chicago region. The "six miles square at the mouth of the Chicago River" ceded by the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 was never surveyed or platted.[39] The Indian boundary lines of the 1816 Treaty are shown on nearly every map of Chicago. They were marked in a survey made in 1817 and 1818 by Captain John C. Sullivan, who was the official surveyor for the Commissioners Richard Graham and Joseph Philips, appointed to survey and mark the boundary lines of the land ceded by the Indians.[40]

The boundaries as laid down by the Treaty read in part as follows:

> "Beginning on the left bank of the Fox River of Illinois, ten miles above the mouth of said Fox River, thence running so as to cross Sandy Creek ten miles above its mouth, thence in a direct line to a point ten miles north of the west end of the portage between Chicago Creek which empties into Lake Michigan,

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[39] It is universally admitted by historians and by engineers that the tract was never surveyed or its boundaries precisely defined.

[40] This treaty was negotiated in St. Louis, August 24, 1816, and was signed by Ninian Edwards, William Clark and Auguste Chouteau, Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, on the part and behalf of said State of the one part, and the chiefs and warriors of the United Tribes of Ottawas, Chippewas and Pottawattomies residing on the Illinois and Milwaukee rivers and their waters, and on the southwestern part of Lake Michigan, of the other part.

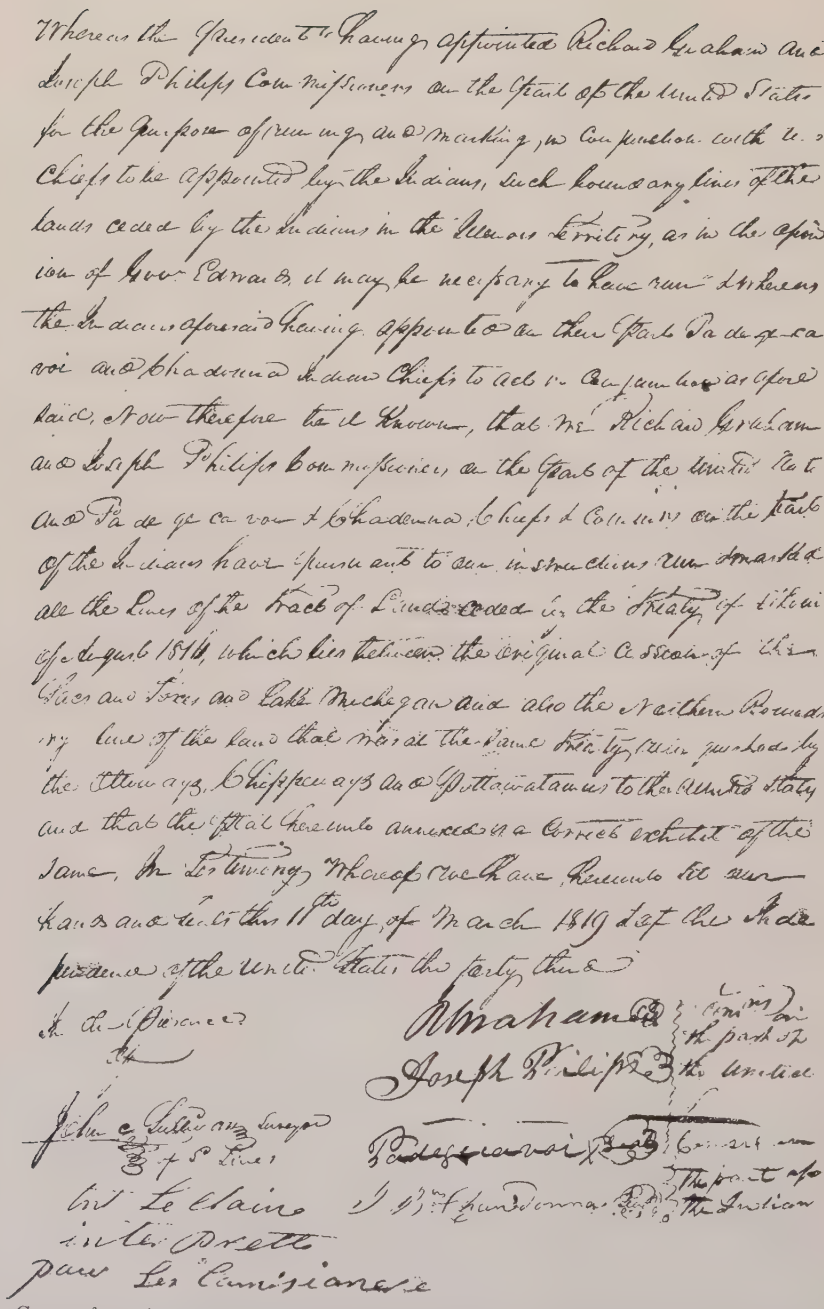
Mr. Joseph Philips, Assistant Secretary of War, and Mr. R. Graham, a Judge of the Supreme Court, were sent to the Chicago region by the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, to mark the boundaries of the land ceded by the Indians in the above mentioned treaty. They were accompanied by Captain John C. Sullivan, a surveyor. Their report is published in State Papers, 16th Congress, 17th report.

and the River Desplaines a fork of the Illinois, thence in a direct line to a point on Lake Michigan ten miles northward of the mouth of Chicago Creek . . . ."

The original plat of the survey made by Captain Sullivan, a photostatic copy of which is in possession of the authors, may be found in the files of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs. This being the accepted plat of record for the ceded territory is indisputable evidence as to the precise location of the "west end of the portage between Chicago Creek which empties into Lake Michigan, and the River Desplaines, a fork of the Illinois." The field notes from which this was platted are a scientific record of the point, and by means of them the location may be determined with precision at any time.

After Joliet's and Marquette's discovery the portage soon became well known as a most advantageous route of travel. Directions for finding it were no doubt easily obtained, for a little later it seems probable that this was the most important and the most intensively used route of its time. Its use as a highway was continuous and knowledge of its location never a matter of uncertainty. That the exact location of the "west end of the Chicago Portage" was well known to the Indians and to the white men who negotiated the treaty of 1816 there can be no doubt.

As to the precise location of the "west end of the portage between Chicago Creek . . . . and the River Desplaines" the following is demonstrated by the Sullivan map. The map clearly shows the surveyor's line beginning at the north bank of the mouth of Portage Creek and continuing north for ten miles, where it terminates at the junction of the line from Lake Michigan with the line from Sandy Creek. Thus identified and platted on the Sullivan map, there can be no questioning the fact that Portage Creek was the old water connec-



Copy of an instrument executed in 1819, ratifying Captain John Sullivan's survey of the Indian Boundary lines, as proposed in the Treaty of St. Louis, 1816. Taken from the original in possession of the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

tion between Mud Lake and the Des Plaines and that it is the true place where the Des Plaines was entered or was left when making the traverse over the Chicago Portage. At the time the survey was made the Portage was in the heyday of its importance and use, and Captain Sullivan saw this place so used. Upon the completion of the survey, Graham and Philips, Commissioners, on behalf of the United States, and the "Chiefs Padegecavoi and Chadonna," representing all the Indian tribes, drew up and signed an instrument based on the map made by Captain Sullivan, all agreeing that it accorded with the Treaty. This is to say, that the chiefs representing the Indian tribes and the commissioners representing the United States of America were in perfect agreement that the "west end of the portage between Chicago Creek . . . . and the River Desplaines" was where Captain Sullivan's map showed its location.

The first extensive official survey of this region was occasioned by the necessity of dividing the Indian Grant of 1816 into townships and sections. It was made in 1821 by John Walls for the General Land Office of the United States. As part of this survey he meandered the course of the Des Plaines River. His notes made on October 16, 1821,[41] record among other things that he ran a line along the east side of the Des Plaines between two of the fixed points in the meander that he describes as extending "across Portage Creek or swamp." This meander is the basic datum with which all authentic maps of the Des Plaines must conform. It is the final authoritative word of the United States Government

[41] John Walls was a Deputy United States Surveyor at the time of this survey; the notes are contained in Government Record Book No. 247, p. 157, U. S. Surveys. Field notes of the meander of the Des Plaines River, in State auditor's office, Springfield, Illinois. Field notes of meander of Chicago River and shore of Lake Michigan; in files of General Land Office, Washington, D. C.

with respect to location on the Des Plaines. No difficulty is met in exactly locating Portage Creek by this record, which is complete and detailed, each section line crossed in the meander being noted. Comparison of the Walls survey with the Sullivan map shows the location of Portage Creek to be identically the same. At the time Engineer Walls was engaged in making this survey the fur trade was at its height and he had plenty of opportunity to observe the actual use of the portage.

The topography of this region previous to the surveys of Sullivan and of Walls had remained unchanged for centuries. "Portage Creek," at the "west end of the portage," as precisely located in these surveys, is unquestionably the very place where Joliet and Father Marquette left the Des Plaines and entered Mud Lake, through which they journeyed to the land carry or portage over the Chicago divide that intervened between Mud Lake and the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River and interrupted continuous water travel between the Mississippi and Lake Michigan.

This is very clear. Father Marquette notes this one interruption in the letter to his superiors describing this journey through the Chicago region thus: "We therefore reascend the Mississippi which gives us much trouble in breasting its currents. It is true that we leave it at about 38th degree, to enter another river which greatly shortens our road and takes us with but little effort to the lake of the Illinois. . . . . In the spring and during part of the summer there is only one portage of half a league."[42]

Joliet made only one journey through the Chicago region; he was accompanied on that historic journey by Father Marquette, and the extract from Father Mar-

[42] *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. 59, pp. 161-163. Thwaites' Translation.

quette's report just quoted is the record of what they found between the mouth of the Illinois River and Lake Michigan. Joliet lost all his maps, and reports of this journey, in the Lachine Rapids near Montreal, but made a report, possibly oral, to Count De Frontenac, who states in his own report on Joliet's journey, made to Colbert, French minister, as follows:

> "The fourth remark concerns a very great and important advantage, which perhaps will hardly be believed. It is that we could go with facility to Florida in a bark, and by very easy navigation. It would be necessary to make a canal, by cutting through but half a league of prairie, to pass from the foot of the Lake of the Illinois [Lake Michigan] to the River Saint Louis [Des Plaines]. Here is the route that would be followed: The bark would be built on Lake Erie, which is near Lake Ontario; it would easily pass from Lake Erie to Lake Huron, whence it would enter Lake Illinois. At the end of that lake the canal or excavation of which I have spoken would be made, to gain a passage into the river Saint Louis, which falls into the Mississippi. The bark, when there, would easily sail to the Gulf of Mexico." [43]

This information in substance is the same as given in Father Marquette's report. Both statements are to the effect that there is half a league of prairie interrupting a direct water route between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, and it is to be noted that this fact was established by both authorities while in each other's company on the same journey. La Salle's letter of 1682, which has already been cited, describes in detail the Chicago River, the portage over the Chicago divide, and also Mud Lake and its connection with the Des Plaines. He quotes Joliet's statement regarding the cutting of

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[43] Margry, Vol. I, pp. 267, 268.
Jesuit Relations, Vol. 58, p. 105.

a canal through the "half league of prairie" and critically discusses its feasibility and practical utility. No one can doubt for a moment that La Salle's discussion, Father Marquette's letter and Joliet's statement all refer to the same place.

La Salle's description of the Chicago River, and of Mud Lake, with the respective distances given by him, is enough in itself to locate accurately the places he describes, and his statement that "This is an isthmus which is 41 degrees 50 minutes elevation from the pole on the west of the lake of the Illinois," this being the true latitude of the "half a league of prairie," absolutely precludes any doubt as to its location.

The location of the place where Marquette and Joliet made their portage of half a league across the strip of prairie being thus definitely fixed, their course from the Des Plaines through Mud Lake to that place can readily be traced.

The "little stream which after twining in and out among the rushes for half a league falls into the Des Plaines," as described by La Salle's letter, is positively identified as the course of the old north arm of Mud Lake, from its beginning at a point between Austin Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue [both produced south], to and including Portage Creek to its mouth at the end of the Portage to the Des Plaines.

At the time Joliet and Father Marquette made their journey of discovery they unquestionably came from the Des Plaines into Mud Lake by way of Portage Creek, as there is nothing to indicate that there was any connection other than Portage Creek existing between the Des Plaines and Mud Lake. This is the natural connection, and nothing had been done nor had anything happened to change it at the time of the Sullivan survey one hundred and forty-four years later, nor at the time

of the Walls survey one hundred and forty-eight years later.

It is now [1928] one hundred and seven years since the Walls survey was made. No change has occurred during that time in the course of Portage Creek nor in the Des Plaines where the creek connects with it, nor in the adjacent land for some distance in each direction from the mouth of the creek. There is no physical evidence of any other connection ever having existed. Neither surveys nor any discoverable records nor even tradition yields a vestige of evidence of another connection.

Conclusive proof is also at hand to show that in recent times Portage Creek was the only connection between the Des Plaines and Mud Lake. During its flood stage the Des Plaines, seeking an outlet through Mud Lake, would flush the sewage-laden Chicago River into Lake Michigan. The water supply from this cause became at times so polluted that the city of Chicago was forced to take remedial measures in order to protect the public health. Fifty-two years ago—in the year 1876—at that time fifty-five years after the Walls survey was made, the Ogden Dam was built across Portage Creek, closing the only outlet of the Des Plaines into Mud Lake. No other dam or levee was found necessary and none other was constructed, as the Ogden Dam completely and effectively served the purpose.

The remains of the old Ogden Dam can be seen today extending across the bed of the creek at the line of Harlem Avenue.

Many years have passed since Portage Creek was generally known by that name, but its identification is complete, and we can state without any hesitation that the very place where Joliet and Marquette turned from the Des Plaines and passed into the little stream is still in existence practically the same as they saw it.

The Ford Where the Des Plaines Was Crossed on the Long Portage Road

In 1824 Colonel Justus Post and René Paul submitted a report accompanied by a map to the first Board of Canal Commissioners, by whom they had been engaged "to explore and examine the country between Lake Michigan and the Illinois for the purpose of recommending a route for a proposed canal." Their original map is in the engineer's office of the War Department of the United States, and a photostat copy of it is in the possession of the writers.[44]

A number of proposed routes for the canal were surveyed and were platted on their map. Their report described in detail how one of these routes would cross at the "Ford of the Desplaines," locating this point on the map by a reference letter, and showing the proposed route by lines drawn through points indicated by this and other reference letters. The "Ford" is thus shown on the map to be immediately north of the island in the Des Plaines at the point where intersected by Tolleston

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[44] Post, Justus, and Paul, René.

February 14, 1823, the General Assembly of Illinois passed An Act to Provide for the Internal Navigation of the State. A board of commissioners was named in the act to carry into effect the Act of Congress of 1822 which had authorized the State of Illinois to open a canal through the public lands to connect the Illinois River and Lake Michigan. The board of commissioners employed Justus Post and René Paul, civil engineers, to explore and examine the country between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River. A copy of their report, dated December 25, 1824, is printed in "Abstract of Proofs," case of U. S. of America *vs.* Economy Light & Power Co. (in Chancery No. 29,776), pp. 2425-2445.

They reported on their survey a number of proposed routes for a canal between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan with an estimate cost of same—submitted to the Canal Commissioners of the State of Illinois at Vandalia, December 25, 1824.

Beach, in the southeast quarter of Sec. 1, Tp. 38 north, 12 east, a little to the west of the center of this quarter section. This map is drawn to a larger scale than the Long map, and the location of the ford is indicated with great accuracy.

The report further states that the ford here is "3 ch. 34 lks." (or 220.44 feet) wide; an unusual width which alone would identify it, for there is no other place in miles where the river is of this width with a hard and gently sloping bank on each side and otherwise quite suitable for fording purposes. The report also gives the distance from Cache Island to the ford as "18 mi. 56 ch., 60 L." The importance of this map and report in precisely locating the true fording place cannot be overestimated, for during the time the survey was being made and the possible routes were being studied there was ample opportunity to observe the portage route repeatedly and to see the road and fording place in daily use.

In 1831 J. M. Bucklin, Engineer for the Canal Commissioners, made "a survey of the region for the purpose of constructing a canal or a railroad." [45] He submitted two separate reports, each accompanied by a map. In his report of the survey for a railroad he quotes from Post and Paul's report, and where the latter uses the term "Ford of the Desplaines," Bucklin indicates the same location by the term "Laughton's Ford or the upper ford of the Desplaines." This is consistent, as Andreas, in his "History of Chicago," relates that the

[45] A copy of Mr. Bucklin's report to Charles Dunn, Acting Commissioner, Illinois and Michigan Canal, is contained in "Report of the Canal Commissioners of Illinois" to Governor John R. Tanner, December 1, 1900, on p. 85 and pp. 88-103. *(Report on Survey for Construction of a Canal or a Railroad to Connect the Head of Navigation on the Chicago River with the Head of Navigation on the Illinois River.)* Two reports are on file in office of the Department of Public Works and Buildings, State of Illinois, with a map of the canal route proposed.

Laughtons, who were well known fur-traders, moved from "Hardscrabble," near the forks of the South Branch, to the Des Plaines in 1827, and established a trading-house on the portage.[46] Bucklin proposed to bridge the Des Plaines at Laughton's Ford for a railroad, and undoubtedly spent considerable time there taking data for the detailed estimate of its cost, submitted as part of his report. It therefore was his experience to see the fording place in actual use during the period of its greatest importance, and the name "Laughton's Ford" applied by him was of his own knowledge fitting and proper.

A most diligent but unsuccessful search has been made for Mr. Bucklin's map of the proposed railroad. The report of the survey that accompanied it in his own handwriting is in the possession of the State of Illinois filed with the records of the Department of Public Works and Buildings. Here also is filed Mr. Bucklin's original map that accompanied the report of his survey for the proposed canal.

The true location of "Laughton's Ford" can be found by checking the distance given by Mr. Bucklin as eighteen miles above Cache Island, and it tallies with Post and Paul's location of the "Ford of the Desplaines." This verification of its location is given in the following excerpt from Mr. Bucklin's reply to Mr. William Thomas, Chairman Senate Committee on Canals, letter of February 8, 1837, appearing on page 135 of the published "Report of the Canal Commissioners of Illinois to Governor John R. Tanner, December 1, 1900," as follows:

"The River Desplaines was gauged, at Laughton's ford, by Messrs. Post and Paul, in the first survey

[46] "History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time," by A. T. Andreas. (Chicago, 1884.) Vol. I, pp. 37, 107, 114, 116, 117, 268, 272.

that was ever made of the route of the Illinois and Michigan canal, and the discharge found to be 72,000 cubic feet per hour. They also gauged it at The Cache island, eighteen miles below, when they ascertained the discharge to be 117,000 cubic feet per hour. In October, 1829, it was gauged by Dr. Howard, U. S. civil engineer, who places the discharge at 96,480 cubic feet per hour. At the same place, (Laughton's ford), it was again gauged by Messrs. Harrison & Guion, on the 8th of August, 1830, and found to discharge 60,000 cubic feet per hour."

On May 24, 1832, Hon. Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, submitted the report by United States Assistant Civil Engineer, H. Belin, to Hon. Andrew Stevenson, Speaker of the House of Representatives, on a survey for a canal to connect Lake Michigan and the Illinois River.[47] On page 9 of said report Engineer Belin states as follows:

"On the 21st of October, 1829, Dr. Howard, United States Civil Engineer, gauged the Desplaines at Lawton's trading house and made the discharge 26.80 cubic feet per second. On the 8th of August, 1831, Messrs.

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[47] Harrison, F., and Guion, W. B.

In accordance with a resolution of the House of Representatives passed April 28, 1832, requiring the engineer who directed the survey of a route of a canal to connect the waters of Lake Michigan with those of the Illinois River to make a report to them, Engineer H. Belin compiled a report of a survey of the Des Plaines and Chicago rivers commenced by Messrs. F. Harrison and W. B. Guion in 1830 and completed by Mr. Belin in 1831. Known as Report No. 546, this document is on file at the office of the War Department, Washington, D. C. A photostatic copy is in the possession of the authors. The title reads: "Report to Lieutenant-Col. J. J. Albert, Topographical Bureau, War Department, Washington, D. C., May 21, 1832, on A Survey to Connect the Waters of Lake Michigan and the Illinois River," by H. Belin, Assistant U. S. Engineer. (War Department, Report No. 546, pp. 7-13, inclusive.)

Nine important and interesting maps accompany this report.

Harrison and Guion gauged it at the same place and made the discharge 15.14 cubic feet per second. Mr. Lawton stated to them that he had seen the river lower."

There is little room for a mistake here for, when compared, the reports of Post and Paul, of Mr. Bucklin, and of Mr. Belin show conclusively that the "Ford of the Desplaines," so called by Post and Paul, "Laughton's Ford," so called by Mr. Bucklin, and "The Desplaines at Lawton's Trading House," the descriptive term used by Mr. Belin, all apply to and indicate one and the same location.

The Commissioners of the Sanitary District of Chicago have in their possession an original map of the Mud Lake region including the Chicago River to the forks, and including the Des Plaines River from Riverside to Summit, the scale of which is eight inches to the mile, affording clearness of detail. This map was made in 1865 by A. J. Mathewson, an engineer and surveyor. Mr. Mathewson was probably more familiar with the physical characteristics of the Chicago Portage than any other person of his time, having made numerous detailed surveys for the Canal Commissioners. Connected with the affairs of the Illinois and Michigan Canal during construction, he made a complete survey of the Chicago River, Mud Lake and part of the Des Plaines in 1837. On his 1865 map there appears a small square, indicating the location of a building near the east bank of the Des Plaines, directly opposite the north end of the island, and the words "Lawton's old trading house" are used as its description. This location is on the old Tolleston Beach adjacent to the river and on the direct line of the portage road to the "Ford of the Desplaines," also known as "Laughton's Ford." The exceptionally large scale to which this map is drawn removes all uncertainty as to the true location of

Laughton's Ford. Post and Paul's map previously mentioned is drawn to a scale of one inch to two and one-half miles. Mathewson's map, being eight inches to one mile, is twenty times as large.

There is no reason to doubt that Mr. Mathewson had often seen this trading house and was very familiar with its location. It is to be noted here that Mr. Mathewson and also Mr. Belin spell the name "Lawton" in the same manner as Mrs. Kinzie does in her book "Wau-Bun."

The authors of this volume have made a thorough and careful search of the ground with the help of this map, and find that there are no existing buildings; but an old partially filled-in excavation, that was the cellar of a building, is quite plainly to be seen at the spot where the map indicates the building should be, which is possibly the actual site of the trading house or one of its out-buildings.

Attention has already been called to Major Long's map, which shows the platted route of his expedition of 1816. If we examine this map carefully we will note that his route lies to the north of Mud Lake. It also shows that he crossed the Des Plaines some distance south of Riverside. This is evidenced by his sketch of the location of "Salt Creek," which flows from the west into the Des Plaines at Riverside. Mud Lake is shown connected by Portage Creek with the Des Plaines at a point to the south of his crossing place. Beyond the Des Plaines to the west, after having made the crossing, he shows his route running along the ridge of the old Tolleston Beach and continuing in a southwesterly direction down the Des Plaines and Illinois valleys. The meandering line extending in a southwesterly direction from Fort Dearborn indicating Major Long's route delineates the first survey made in the Chicago region. The direction or "bearing" of the included segments

was established by compass and the distances measured or estimated. The geographical features were filled in as determined visually, for it must be remembered that the Des Plaines and Mud Lake were not surveyed until five years later. This is the very first map ever made to show the location and direction of the Portage Road and the approximate location of the place where the Des Plaines was forded. It is of inestimable value in this respect.[48]

In the year 1829, Henry S. Tanner, Geographer and Map Publisher, of Philadelphia, produced a map of Illinois and Missouri, as he states, "from data obtained from documents found in the public offices of the United States and State Governments." In addition he accords special mention to Colonel Stephen H. Long. The Tanner map shows among other features all the township lines included within the boundary lines of the Indian Grant of 1816. The boundary lines of this cession were surveyed by Captain Sullivan in 1817. The township lines were surveyed by John Walls principally, in 1821. The valuable and instructing feature of this map lies in its showing the location of the Portage Road north of Mud Lake, extending from Fort Dearborn to and beyond the Des Plaines, and showing indisputably where the road crossed the Des Plaines. The road is shown also to continue down the Des Plaines Valley and to Fort Clark, at the site of the present city of Peoria.

In the northeast corner of township 12 east, 38 north, the road is shown crossing the Des Plaines. The north boundary of this township is Pershing Road, formerly known as West Thirty-ninth Street; its eastern boundary is Harlem Avenue. The fording place is shown some distance south of Pershing Road and a short distance

[48] Report of Major Long, State Papers, First Session, 16th Congress, Document No. 17, p. 6.

north of Portage Creek, which also is plainly shown and in its proper location. All the geographical features shown on this particular map are located according to their relative positions as determined by actual surveys made on the ground, and the map is drawn to a scale. Although the scale used is too small for absolutely precise re-location, there is not the slightest difficulty encountered in identifying positively the place where the road crosses the Des Plaines as "Laughton's Ford."

The Tanner map is unique, as it is the first, last and only map in existence based on authentic surveys that shows the complete route of the long Portage Road in the Chicago region and includes that part of it lying between Harlem Avenue and the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons, as well as the location of the ford where the road crossed the Des Plaines. Major Long's map also shows the complete long Portage Road, but that is its only feature based on an actual survey and scientifically platted. On the Tanner map every feature included is based on actual surveys, and with respect to the Chicago region it is the best of all the cartographer's productions.

Major Long, who had been advanced to a colonelship at the time Tanner made his map, personally assisted in the preparation of this map, according to the appreciative acknowledgment of Mr. Tanner, and this fact gives us assurance that the Portage Road is correctly platted in the place where shown on this map.

To summarize the points determined as the net results of our examination of maps, these may be restated, as follows:

Major Long's map and report of his 1816 expedition accurately show the portage route to have been through the Mud Lake region, and the Portage Road to have been north of Mud Lake.

Captain Sullivan's map of 1817 shows the "west end

of the portage between Chicago Creek and the Desplaines" to have been on the east bank of the Des Plaines north of Portage Creek at its mouth.

John Walls, United States Surveyor, by his notes of the meander of the Des Plaines gives us the location of Portage Creek with absolute precision.

Post and Paul's map gives us the location of the "Ford of the Desplaines" with absolute precision.

The map of the Government Survey of 1821 precisely locates the Portage Road for that part of it that extended between present Western Avenue and Harlem Avenue.

A. J. Mathewson's map gives us the location of "Lawton's Trading House" with absolute precision.

We may now reconstruct the "Old Chicago Portage" as it was when Joliet and Father Marquette first came through it.

La Salle's record of its latitude and his discussion of Joliet's optimistic report gives us the unquestionable location of the "half a league of prairie" that Joliet passed over but once, then on the occasion of his memorable journey of discovery with Father Marquette.

The Sullivan survey gives the site of the west end of the portage at Portage Creek, and Wall's meander of the Des Plaines enables us to re-locate Portage Creek with complete accuracy. This gives us the location of the very place where Joliet and Father Marquette turned from the Des Plaines and began their journey through Mud Lake. The Government Survey map of 1821 gives us the location of the channels in Mud Lake which they followed to about Kedzie Avenue, and also shows the place where the "gutter worn by the Indians and French dragging their boats across the portage" was situated. This takes us to the Chicago River, and then by way of Chicago River to Lake Michigan, which

marks the eastern termination of the Chicago Portage Route.

This reconstruction of Joliet and Father Marquette's route through the Chicago Portage is complete. There are no gaps nor uncertainties in it. It clearly demonstrates that they turned from the Des Plaines into Portage Creek, passed through the creek into the north arm of Mud Lake, which brought them to the eastern extremity of Mud Lake at a point just east of present Kedzie Avenue. From here they dragged their boats over half a league of prairie along the line of what is now the course of the Chicago River to the head of navigation at about the present Leavitt Street, and from there they paddled to Lake Michigan by way of the Chicago River.

This last mentioned map also gives us the location of the Portage Road between Western Avenue and Harlem Avenue. Wall's notes give us an intermediate point on the Portage Road between Harlem Avenue and Sullivan's location of the end of the portage at Portage Creek, and we can complete the unplatted part of the road from this data.

This reconstruction furnishes us the veritable route of the Indians, the missionaries, the fur-traders, and the explorers over the Portage Road from the head of navigation on the Chicago River to the west end of the portage at the junction of Portage Creek and the Des Plaines during such times as Mud Lake was dry or unnavigable.

The long Portage Road that crossed the Des Plaines at Laughton's Ford, situated at about one-half of a mile north of the mouth of Portage Creek, extended from the head of navigation on the Chicago River at about Leavitt Street to the head of navigation on the Illinois River at La Salle, Illinois, a distance of about one hundred miles. This road in some form was in

existence at the time of La Salle, for he recommended its use to convey goods by horses from his "Fort Saint Louis to the lake," stating that the Des Plaines was only navigable for canoes in the springtime. It is easy to get a false impression from this statement of La Salle as to the navigability of the Des Plaines. It is true that during a long, dry summer season it would "become a succession of pools connected by shallow currents," but this only happened occasionally and then only at the height of a very dry season. Except for occasional short periods it was quite navigable for the canoes of the itinerant trader, the Indian and the missionary.

La Salle's master mind, capable of thinking and planning in terms of continents, and better fitted for the twentieth than the seventeenth century, conceived the colonization of the Illinois Valley and an immense trade route from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. It is inconceivable that he would have recommended the cutting of a canal for mere row-boats. The canoes he spoke of for the transportation of goods were large and commodious, capable of transporting four to ten tons and drawing not less than fifteen to twenty inches of water, quite different from the ordinary canoe drawing four to six inches of water, or the light canoe of even less draught.

The Des Plaines and Illinois valleys were intensively traveled both by water and by land. The canoe Indians used the water route as far as possible, and the land route was used by the tribes that came by land from the north and crossed into the valley at the Riverside Ford or at Stony Ford, likewise by those who came from the south and east, crossing at the Summit Ford.

Four intensively traveled trails merged about three-fourths of a mile west of the Des Plaines and formed the great trail or road running southwest down the valley.

These came from the Riverside Ford, Stony Ford, Laughton's Ford, and the Summit Ford.

The water route, and this great trail that ran parallel to it, immediately upon its discovery became the trade route for the white man's commerce, and development was along these two paths. The increasing importance of the long Portage Road has already been noted, and so from a dry season carrying-place that great avenue of early commerce, the long Portage Road, was developed. West and southwest of Forty-seventh Street and Joliet Avenue in Lyons it exists to-day, straightened out and re-located in spots, to be sure, but still following the general route of the old Portage Road. East of Forty-seventh Street and Joliet Avenue it does not exist as a road, and only a few traces of it are now visible. However, Major Long's map and Tanner's map give its geographical position, and the United States Government Survey of 1821 gives its accurate location from Western Avenue to Harlem Avenue. In perfect consonance with these three maps, its continuation can be reconstructed as it originally existed between Harlem Avenue and Joliet Avenue, for Post and Paul's map gives us the precise location of Laughton's Ford and from Mathewson's map we obtain the exact location of Lawton's old Trading House, and all of these places are situated on the old Tolleston Beach ridge, which connects them in a continuous line, marking the route of the long Portage Road.

Assembling this data, we obtain the exact location of the long Portage Road from the head of navigation on the Chicago River at Leavitt Street, along the north shore of Mud Lake to the crossing at Laughton's Ford, and from there to the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons, which follows its general course to the head of navigation on the Illinois River at La Salle, Illinois. Thus the long Portage Road of an-

tiquity looms out of the mists of time well defined in its every twist and turn.

A number of arguments can be advanced to bear out the statement that Laughton's Ford of the Des Plaines, situated fifty feet north of the point where the produced line of West Forty-fifth Street crosses the Des Plaines, was the true crossing place of the Portage Road. First, it was on the line of the shortest and most direct route between the authentically recorded location of the Portage Road at Harlem Avenue and the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet road in Lyons. These points are one and one-quarter miles apart in a straight line. The west bank of the Des Plaines at Laughton's Ford is exactly half way between them, and the ford itself is practically on the straight line. As Stony Ford is located three-eighths of a mile farther north, to use this crossing would add three-fourths of a mile to the distance to be traveled.

Riverside Ford is still farther north, and to use this crossing would add at least three miles to the journey. If there is any difference in the ground that would be traveled over in using any of these three mentioned routes, the advantage lies with the straight road to Laughton's Ford, especially so in wet weather, as the nature of the ground along the Tolleston Beach ridge is sandy.

Second, at this place the river ran in a single channel, and the road crossed from a high and dry bank on one side to a high and dry bank on the other side. There was no other place in a southerly direction between Laughton's Ford and Summit Ford where the Des Plaines ran in a single channel. That is to say, there were two channels to cross at every point along the island, and below the island there was a shallow channel or broad marsh for all the distance to Summit lying

to the west between the Des Plaines and the Chicago and Joliet Road along Tolleston Beach.

Third, the river flow must, for greatest accuracy, be gauged above the island and the marsh, as it is somewhat impracticable to gauge two streams, one on either side of the island, or to try to compute the whole flow in one such channel where there is a possibility of part of the flow draining through a marsh.

When we consider the Des Plaines in a northerly direction between Laughton's Ford and Riverside Ford, there are a number of places where it could be gauged very conveniently, but there is not one of these places where the stream attains the width of 220 feet, as it does directly at the head of the island.

Fourth, the river banks at the head of the island slope gently to the water, and are of hard sand and gravelly material in contrast to the steeper and softer dirt banks farther north. The bottom of the river here also is hard and broad and was therefore usable as a ford during high water for a longer period than the narrower and consequently deeper channels farther to the north.

In view of this evidence it appears conclusive that the portion of the Long Portage Road, unplatted on the Government Survey map of 1821, extended westerly from Harlem Avenue, at a point about 600 feet south of West Forty-third Street, along the Tolleston Beach ridge past the site of "Lawton's old Trading House" to the "Ford of the Desplaines," otherwise "Lawton's Ford." Crossing the Des Plaines here, it extended in a southwesterly direction along the Tolleston Beach ridge to the beginning of the Chicago and Joliet Road, that marks the continuation of its general course to La Salle, the head of navigation on the Illinois River.

The Tolleston Beach exists as it did in nature with but few changes from Hawthorne race-track westward

for some distance beyond its junction with the Chicago and Joliet Road in Lyons.

The intersection of West Thirty-ninth Street and South Central Avenue, which is about three miles east of the Des Plaines, marks the place where the second short portage to Des Plaines River, as noted in early descriptions, began; here the road and the channel came within 100 feet of each other, and beyond to the west they diverged greatly from each other, with a marsh that was probably impassable lying between them.

Modern improvements have destroyed the natural condition of the ford at Riverside, and also of the ford at Summit, but Stony Ford, possibly the oldest Indian fording place in this vicinity, situated right in the middle of the entrance to the Des Plaines Valley, is absolutely unchanged [October, 1927]since its first use.

Laughton's Ford, formerly the most important fording place of the Des Plaines within the realm of written history, it being the crossing place of the main route of travel, exploration and trade through this region, has been partially obliterated. The easterly bank has been to some extent cut away to furnish material with which to construct the diversion levee that begins slightly north of this point and runs south along the middle of the river, passing through the old ford. The westerly part of Laughton's Ford beyond the diversion levee, including the west bank of the river and the land terrace, still remains unchanged from its original appearance and condition.

A small part of the former route of the old Portage Road still exists as in nature to the east of Laughton's Ford through the Forest Preserve.

Parts of the course of the old south arm of Mud Lake can be readily traced by even a casual observer,

and during certain seasons of the year some segments of the north arm may be pointed out by those familiar with their location.

More than ninety years have passed since the old Chicago Portage, after centuries of great importance, fell into disuse. Almost overnight, as it were, the complexion of the entire region changed. The newcomers, who were an entirely different class of people, either never knew of or soon forgot the very existence of the Portage. There is absolutely no monument, marker or tablet in existence to indicate its location.

That many of these almost hallowed places are on the property of the Sanitary District or within the Cook County Forest Preserves is fortunate indeed. It would be something akin to sacrilege if they are not marked, preserved and handed down to posterity both as an incentive to the study of the history of the Old Northwest in which they played so important a part, and to perpetuate the memory of the old Chicago Portage and the valiant men who passed over it.

One standing in contemplation of the entrance to Portage Creek in the midst of a scene to-day so commonplace and so desolate finds it difficult to realize that here are the portals through which civilization passed in entering this region. But it is recorded in the archives of two continents that when the story of those two brave hearts that first passed this lonely water gate in the wilderness was given to the world there began a change that has culminated in the building here of the second largest city in the Western Hemisphere.

Chapter VI

THE TRUE LOCATION OF THE OLD MOUTH OF THE CHICAGO RIVER

The re-location of the Chicago Portage would leave much to be desired did it not clear away the erroneous conclusions as to the point where the Chicago River entered Lake Michigan that have befogged Chicago historians generally. The present mouth of the river is the result of the first river-straightening done in Chicago.

The Chicago River of early days had a depth varying from twelve to twenty-six feet. Its average depth was given as twenty feet. The strong northeast winds had produced disturbances of the lake which tended to pile up sand along the southern shores, more or less obstructing all of the mouths of rivers, and on the west shore giving the sand spits thus formed a southerly trend. The gentle current of the Chicago River in seeking an outlet was forced to accommodate itself to this trend.

United States Assistant Engineer H. Belin reports that during the summer of 1831 the river flowed into the lake over a sand-bar. Sounded at that time, the water was found to be two feet deep over the bar. From the mouth of the river to Fort Dearborn, a distance of 467 yards, the course was nearly north, parallel with the lake, and the depth varied from six to fifteen feet. He also states in his report that from Fort Dearborn to the "Forks" the course is west, the distance 1150 yards, and the depth of the river from fifteen to twenty-six feet.

About the year 1833 the Government caused a channel to be cut across the sand-bar from Fort Dearborn eastward to the lake. The old mouth being abandoned, this was closed by the drifting sand. In 1830 F. Harrison, Jr., U. S. Assistant Engineer, made a map of the river's course from a little west of our present State Street to its mouth, and showed on this map where he proposed to cut the channel across the sand-bar, and also where a proposed dam was to be constructed to close the old mouth of the river after the channel had been completed. A similar map was made by Post and Paul for the same purpose at about the same time. These maps are in perfect agreement, although the makers worked entirely independently of each other.

The Government survey of 1821-22 gives the field notes bounding the area enclosed by what was later Chicago Avenue, Madison Street, State Street and Lake Michigan, with a meander of the north bank of the river. From this and other data a composite map has been made, showing the location of the old mouth of the river and other places with reference to the streets as they are to-day.

This composite map is made up as follows:

First, an accurate tracing was made, from the plats in the City Map Department of Chicago, of the territory bounded by Chicago Avenue, Madison Street, Clark Street and the shore of Lake Michigan, showing the exact location of all the streets, the Chicago River and the shore of the lake as it was in 1925.

Second, the Government field notes of the true line between Sections 9 and 10 [middle line of State Street] from Chicago Avenue to the north bank of the Chicago River, as surveyed and recorded June 18, 1821, were platted on this tracing. [It is to be noted as a matter of fact that the line between Sections 9 and 10 on the

north side of the river is located by the original survey 60.7 feet west of the same line on the south side of the river.]

From the old location of the corner of fractional sections 9 and 10 and the north bank of the Chicago River [shown by No. 15 on map] the meander lines along the north bank of the river in fractional Section 10 were then platted. These lines are six in number and terminate at No. 16 on map.

Third, the old course of the Chicago River and the old shore line of Lake Michigan were traced from a photostat copy of a map of the mouth of the Chicago River made by F. Harrison, Jr., Assistant U. S. Civil Engineer, approved by Wm. Howard, U. S. Civil Engineer, February 24, 1830.

This map was prepared by order of the Government for the purpose of showing the proposed improvements in the mouth of the Chicago River and correctly plats the location of Fort Dearborn with its surroundings, also all the buildings in this locality then in existence. By checking on the meridian lines as laid out on this map and in this manner making the north bank of the Chicago River exactly conform to the platted meander line of same, the positions of all the other details are correctly located.

Previous to tracing the Harrison-Howard map, it was compared with a similar map made by Post and Paul at about the same time and for the same purpose. With respect to the location of the banks of the river, its old mouth, the shore line of Lake Michigan and the position of all the buildings, both maps exactly coincide with each other. This is important, as the surveys on which each map is based were made by different persons and absolutely independently of each other.

The Harrison-Howard map is reproduced in the "History of Chicago" by A. T. Andreas [1884], with

A composite map showing the location of the old mouth of the Chicago River and vicinity with reference to present-day course of the river and the location of existing streets.
(See legend pages 83-89.)

such "additions and changes" made by him as were "suggested by the memory of early settlers." A number of these additions are also included on the composite map, as will be noted.

There is also to be noted the location of several buildings of old Fort Dearborn (numbered 11, 12, 13 and 14). These are platted from "Map G, No. 17" and "made by a corps of topographical engineers under the supervision of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel J. D. Graham under the authority of an Act of Congress of July 21st, 1852, and August 1st, 1854, by the orders of Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, April 10th, 1855." The said map shows the location of all the streets between Dearborn Street and the lake and from Lake Street to Kinzie Street, and a detailed survey plat of all the lots between South Water Street and the river, showing the location of these buildings with reference to those street lines. These are reproduced on the composite map with reference to street lines exactly as shown on this Government map.

A peculiar difference in detail is to be noted here. This is with reference to the lay-out of Fort Dearborn. On both the Harrison-Howard map and the Post and Paul map the east and west sides of the Fort are shown to run in a somewhat northwesterly and southeasterly direction. On the reproduced copy of the Harrison-Howard map in Andreas' history previously mentioned, the direction has been changed to show these sides to run somewhat northeasterly and southwesterly. In Colonel Graham's map of 1855 the buildings are shown as reproduced on the composite map, that is, running northeasterly and southwesterly.

In the collection of the Chicago Historical Society is the original map of Joshua Hathaway, Jr. made in 1834, a reproduction of which will be found in Blanchard's "The Northwest and Chicago." This map also

shows the sides of the fort to run in a northeasterly and southwesterly direction. We are unable to account for this discrepancy except possibly that when the new channel and mouth for the river were opened shortly before 1834, the old course of the river being straightened and widened, it may have been necessary to move the buildings of the fort and that the direction in which they had lain was changed.

Key to composite map:

A—Fort Dearborn and Reservation traced from Harrison-Howard map, 1830.

B—Garden for Fort, from Harrison map.

C—Cultivated field belonging to Fort—One of the added features shown on Harrison Map published by Andreas.

D—U. S. Factor's Houses, from Harrison Map. Dotted lines enclosing lot are from Andreas.

E—John Craft's house and lot. House on Harrison Map; name and dotted lines enclosing lot are from Andreas.

F—Fort Cemetery,—Buildings shown are from Harrison Map. Dotted enclosure and name are from Andreas, who omits buildings.

G—Doctor Wolcott's place, from Harrison Map.

H—Proposed piers for improving the harbor, from Harrison Map.

I—Road leading to and from the Reservation and Fort. Dotted lines are platted from Andreas. The zig-zag lines are traced from the Harrison Map and indicate rail-fences.

J—Meander of shore line of Lake Michigan beginning at Madison Street and extending northerly

to south bank of river. This is correctly platted from Government notes of survey made in 1821.

K—It occurred to the authors that there was error in the Government field notes and that this meander may have been recorded uncorrected with reference to the magnetic meridian which varied 8° 15′ east of the true meridian. It was therefore platted in that position also, and is thus shown.

1—The correct location of the Kinzie house, from Harrison Map. It was occupied at that time by Mr. Bailey.

2—"Wash house for Fort" located on Harrison Map —name from Andreas.

3—"Shop" for Fort named and located on Harrison Map.

4—"Fort Dearborn Well" located and named by Andreas.

5—"Big Barn with Cupola" located by Harrison Map. Named by Andreas.

6—Grave of Mrs. Chas. Jouett, wife of the first Indian Agent and Government Factor at Chicago. She was the former Miss Eliza Dodemead of Detroit; was married at Detroit in 1803 and died in Chicago in 1805. Location by Andreas.

7—Gate to Fort Dearborn Reservation, from Harrison Map. Named by Andreas.

8—Location of mouth of the Chicago River and dam which was proposed to close it. Both the Harrison-Howard Map and the Post and Paul Map show this to be the correct location of the old mouth of the river. Great care has been exercised in fixing this important point and its true location cannot vary from the place indicated by

more than ten or fifteen feet at most. This is the Lake Michigan end of the old Chicago Portage Route.

9 and 10—Unnamed buildings shown on Harrison Map. Omitted by Andreas.

11—This building is platted from the Graham Map of 1855 as previously mentioned. The Graham Map bears the following description of it:

"Old barracks of hewn logs used for draughtsman's office and public storehouse."

12—From Lieutenant Colonel Graham's 1855 Map described as follows:

"Old barracks of hewn logs dilapidated and not worth repairs."

13—"Carpenter shop of hewn logs"—name and description from Graham's Map.

14—"Block house of hewn logs" from Graham's Map; an important location precisely given. The northwest corner of this block bounded by River Street and the Plaza facing the Chicago River here shown, is also the street line of the London Guarantee and Trust Building recently erected. The block house of the Second Fort Dearborn, which scales about 25 x 25 feet on Lieutenant Colonel Graham's map, was located just as here indicated, directly adjoining the northwest corner of the new building.

15—The old corner of Fractional Sections 9 and 10 at the north bank of the Chicago River; the beginning of the meander of the north bank of the Chicago River.

16—The end of the meander. This point was given in the Government notes as the "Mouth of the Chicago River on the North Side." It is plainly

shown in the Harrison-Howard Map as the point where the relatively high bank of the river ended. Here also is indicated the gravel beach bending the river southward to reach its outlet to the lake immediately south of our present Lake Street. The "Green Bay Trail" which approximately followed the line of Rush Street is shown to have turned near the Kinzie house to the lake shore, following this beach across the mouth of the river. As described by La Salle the mouth was always more or less blocked by a sand-bar and very shallow.

The re-location of the mouth of the Chicago River as shown in the composite map, was most unexpectedly verified during November and December, 1926, and January, 1927. The Illinois Central Railroad Company was at this time building a new suburban passenger station at their Randolph Street terminal. As part of this work an excavation was made extending from the south line of South Water Street to about one hundred feet south of Randolph Street. This excavation was one hundred and thirteen feet in width, lying east of the east line of Beaubien Court. The total depth was twenty feet, the bottom being at an average depth of ten feet below city datum. The present authors made many visits to the site during the progress of this excavation. The nature of the material was noted and the sides of the excavated trench showing the arrangement of the strata were photographed. The lower stratum is blue clay; this is overlaid with beach sand of varying thickness, and above the sand is a miscellaneous filling that brings the premises up to present street grade.

Through the courtesy of the chief engineer in charge of construction work, we have obtained the elevation of the surface of the underlying clay, as recorded from observations made by his engineering force. On the

east side of the trench at South Water Street, the surface of the clay is five feet below what is known in Chicago as "city datum," or the approximate level of the surface of Lake Michigan. The clay rises slightly to the south and at Lake Street is three feet six inches below datum. About two hundred feet north of Randolph Street it is five feet below datum. From there it runs about level to the north line of Randolph Street, and then in a distance of fifty feet it falls to eight feet below datum.

On the west side of the trench, which is on the east line of Beaubien Court, the clay surface is four feet six inches below datum at the line of South Water Street. At Lake Street it is six feet six inches below datum. One hundred feet south of Lake Street it is six feet below datum. From that point the surface of the clay rises gradually, and at Randolph Street it is about four feet below datum.

As will be seen on the Composite Map, the narrowest part of the mouth of the river was in the middle of Michigan Avenue, the north edge of the river averaging twenty-five feet south of the south line of Lake Street, and the south edge of the river averaging one hundred feet south of the south line of Lake Street. From the east line of Michigan Avenue, the south edge of the river bears southeast and crosses Beaubien Court diagonally in a southeast direction some distance north of Randolph Street.

The depression in the clay surface, it will be noted also, extended in a southeasterly direction across the trench from a point about one hundred feet south of the south line of Lake Street on its west side to a point about the middle line of Randolph Street on the east side. This depression in the clay surface was the old channel of the Chicago River where it entered Lake Michigan. That this is the case is further verified by

the fact that there was relatively less sand and more filling along this depression, the course of the old channel; in fact, the sand came to the surface of the ground from South Water Street south to Lake Street on the west side of the trench and nearly to Randolph Street on the east side, the surface of the sand sloping downward to the south from an irregular line connecting those points and being reduced to a very thin layer one hundred feet south of Randolph Street.

An old breakwater was uncovered and removed. This was built of sixteen by sixteen inch white oak timbers, one timber in width, eight courses of timber in height. This breakwater was extremely well constructed, and was held in position with long hemlock timber ties dovetailed into it about every course, and every eight feet in its length the timbers were doweled together with oak dowels, two and one-half inches in diameter. The breakwater was three hundred and fifty feet long. Its north end was just south of Lake Street and it extended south to Randolph Street. Running in a straight line its north end was thirteen feet east of the east line of Beaubien Court, and at the south end, at the north line of Randolph Street, its face was one foot east of the east line of Beaubien Court.

After the present mouth of the river was opened, the sand-bar extending south and situated between the old channel of the river and Lake Michigan was washed away, closing the old mouth of the river and filling up its old river bed. This accounts for the arrangement of the sand that overlay the clay as has been noted. The filling of the old channel after the opening of the new mouth of the river is indicated on a map in the United States Engineer's Office, dated October 15th, 1837, bearing the signature of its maker, "Capt. J. Allen, U.S.A. on Engineering duty." We were deeply gratified to have the opportunity to make this verification

of the location of the old river mouth, for it completes the last link in the route taken by Joliet and Father Marquette on their historic journey through Chicago.

Chapter VII

EXACT LOCATION OF THE PORTAGE AND OF MUD LAKE

With a view to simplifying the labors of those upon whom may devolve the task of placing markers to indicate the boundaries of Chicago's lost lake, and in addition to the map showing its size, shape and location, it will be the authors' endeavor to describe the outline of Mud Lake as indications show it to have been when Joliet and Marquette first plied their paddles in its waters in going from the Des Plaines to Kedzie Avenue. From this description it will be possible to plat the lake on a map of the city or to trace its boundaries on the original terrain.

The original short portage was coincident with the line of the river as it now extends from about the present line of South Leavitt Street to a little east or west of Kedzie Avenue, being longer or shorter, depending on the height of water in Mud Lake. A short distance to the north of this was a trail that merged with Portage Road near Kedzie Avenue.

Mud Lake was included in Sections 26, 33, 34, 35 and 36 of Township 39 North, Range 13 East; Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Township 38 North, Range 13 East, and Sections 1 and 12 of Township 38 North, Range 12 East. A small portion of the southwest corner of Section 25, Township 39 North, Range 13 East, was occupied by the extreme northeast reach of the lake. It extended about 700 feet east of Kedzie Avenue and about 600 feet north of 31st Street.

Cross lines running north and south are arranged progressively with reference to city streets and the points of the compass at one-quarter mile intervals, beginning with Kedzie Avenue and progressing westward. The features which we hope to make plain are: (1) the Portage Road on the north side of the lake, (2) the position of the north edge of Mud Lake, (3) the middle of the Channel, (4) the south edge of Mud Lake, (5) the south Portage Path, as well as the configuration of the island, and both the (6) north and (7) south channels of the lake. These points will be given on the ¼ mile north and south lines, and the distances will be noted north or south of the nearest intersecting section line, half-section line or quarter-section line. The section, half-section and quarter-section lines progressing from north to south are as follows:

22nd Street	41st Street
23rd Place	43rd Street
26th Street	45th Street
29th Street	47th Street
31st Street	49th Street
33rd Street	51st Street
35th Street	53rd Street
37th Street	55th Street
39th Street	Section Line

It is believed this method will save confusion in identifying the progression from north to south, and that from east to west.

It must be understood that the streets named do not extend as public roadways through the Mud Lake region in every case, and a certain amount of familiarity with the whole region is necessary before comprehensive identification is possible.

Note: In the tables on pages 95 and 96 and also on pages 97 and 98 the locations are to be read beginning at the left-hand edge of page 95 continuing across the pages to the right-hand edge of page 96. The same method applies to pages 97 and 98.

North and South Streets	Location of North Trail	North Edge of Portage Lake	Center of Channel in North Arm	Location of Original Portage
Leavitt Street	300 ft. N. of W. 26th St.			650 ft. S. of W. 26th St.
Western Ave.	at line of 25th Pl.			675 ft. S. of W. 26th St.
Rockwell St.	300 ft. S. of 26th St.			700 ft. S. of 26th St.
California Ave.	1250 ft. S. of 26th St.			1200 ft. N. of 31st St.
Sacramento Ave.	1300 ft. S. of 26th St.			300 ft. N. of 31st St.
Kedzie Ave.	At 29th St.			550 ft. S. of 31st St.
	Location of North Portage Road			Center of Singl Channel
Kedzie Ave.	At 29th St.	600 ft. N. of W. 31st St.		550 ft. S. of W. 31st St.
Homan Ave.	50 ft. S. of 29th St.	225 ft. N. of W. 31st St.		880 ft. S. of W. 31st St.
Central Park Ave.	250 ft. S. of 29th St.	400 ft. S. of W. 31st St.		on line of W. 35th St.
Hamlin Ave.	150 ft. N. of 31st St.	500 ft. S. of W. 31st St.		400 ft. S. of W. 33rd St.
Crawford Ave.	200 ft. S. of W. 31st St.	750 ft. S. of W. 31st St.		580 ft. S. of W. 33rd St.
Plus ¼ mi.	700 ft. S. of W. 31st St.	900 ft. S. of W. 31st St.		on line of W. 35th St.
Plus ½ mi.	900 ft. S. of W. 31st St.	on line of W. 33rd St.		on line of W. 36th St.
Plus ¾ mi.	500 ft. S. of W. 33rd St.	700 ft. S. of W. 33rd St.		on line of W. 37th St.
Cicero Ave.	400 ft. N. of W. 35th St.	250 ft. N. of W. 35th St.		200 ft. S. of W. 37th St.
Plus ¼ mi.	50 ft. S. of W. 35th St.	on line of W. 38th St.		350 ft. S. of W. 38th St.

North Side of Island	South Side of Island	Center of Channel South Arm	South Edge of Portage Lake	South Portage Road
			on line of W. 33rd St.	at line of W. 35th St.
			450 ft. N. of W. 35th St.	At Pershing Road
			150 ft. S. of W. 35th St.	At line of W. 43rd St.
			550 ft. S. of W. 35th St.	150 ft. S. of W. 46th St.
			750 ft. S. of W. 35th St.	100 ft. N. of W. 49th St.
			350 ft. N. of W. 37th St.	on line of W. 50th St.
			50 ft. S. of W. 37th St.	on line of Archer Ave.
			on line of W. 38th St.	on line of Archer Ave.
			650 ft. N. of W. 39th St.	300 ft. N. of Archer Ave.
			300 ft. N. of W. 39th St.	650 ft. N. of Archer Ave.

North and South Streets	Location of North Portage Road	North Edge of Portage Lake	Center of Channel in North Arm	Center of Single Channel
Plus ½ mi.	450 ft. S. of W. 35th St.	900 ft. S. of W. 35th St.		50 ft. S. of W. 38th St.
Plus ¾ mi.	on line of W. 37th St.	on line of W. 37th St.		150 ft. N. of W. 39th St.
Central Ave.	150 ft. N. of W. 39th St.	150 ft. S. of W. 39th St.		200 ft. S. of W. 39th St.
Plus ¼ mi.	150 ft. S. of W. 39th St.	100 ft. S. of W. 39th St.		on line of W. 41st St.
Austin Ave.	on line of W. 41st St.	150 ft. N. of W. 42nd St.		100 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.
Plus ¾ mi.	1450 ft. S. of W. 39th St.	100 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	750 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	(Dividing of North Arm and South Arm occurs ⅛ mile West of Austin Ave.)
Ridgeland Ave.	600 ft. N. of W. 43rd St.	200 ft. N. of W. 43rd St.	100 ft. S. of W. 45th St.	
Plus ¼ mi.	150 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	500 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	400 ft. S. of W. 45th St.	
Oak Park Ave. Plus ½ mi.	200 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	600 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	on line of W. 47th St.	(Confluence of North and South Channels is about 400 ft. East of Harlem Ave.)
Plus ¾ mi.	300 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	700 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	250 ft. S. of W. 47th St.	
Harlem Ave.	600 ft. S. of W. 43rd St.	on line of W. 46th St.		200 ft. N. of W. 49th St. at Ogden dam
Plus ¼ (River)	50 ft. N. of W. 45th St.			
Plus ½ mi.	100 ft. S. of W. 45th St.			
Plus ¾ mi.	on line of W. 46th St.			
Joliet Ave.	at W. 47th St.			

North Side of Island	South Side of Island	Center of Channel South Arm	South Edge Portage Lake	South Portage Road
			on line of W. 39th St.	700 ft. N. of Archer Ave.
			on line of W. 41st St.	675 ft. N. of Archer Ave.
			200 ft. N. of W. 43rd St.	600 ft. N. of Archer Ave.
			200 ft. S. of W. 45th St.	500 ft. N. of Archer Ave.
(E. End of Island is ¼ mile W. of	Austin Ave.)		300 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	200 ft. S. of W. 53rd St.
on line of W. 45th St.	100 ft. S. of W. 47th St.	on line of W. 49th St.	100 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	300 ft. S. of W. 53rd St.
600 ft. N. of W. 47th St.	600 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	350 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	500 ft. S. of W. 51st St.	200 ft. S. of W. 53rd St.
100 ft. N. of W. 47th St.	400 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	on line of W. 51st St.	800 ft. S. of W. 51st St.	100 ft. N. of W. 53rd St.
400 ft. S. of W. 47th St.	on line of W. 49th St.	300 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	500 ft. S. of W. 51st St.	250 ft. N. of W. 53rd St.
100 ft. S. of W. 47th St.	650 ft. S. of W. 47th St.	on line of W. 49th St.	on line of W. 51st St.	250 ft. N. of W. 53rd St.
(W. End of Island ¼ mi. East Harlem)			600 ft. N. of W. 51st St.	50 ft. S. of W. 53rd St.
				400 ft. S. of W. 53rd St.
				on line of W. 54th St.
				on line of W. 53rd St.
				on line of W. 52nd St.
				(Summit Ford is 200 ft. N.W. of this point.)

Thévenot's map. Published first in 1681 in his "Recueil de voyages," in connection with Marquette's "Découvertes dans l' Amérique Septentrionale."
The outstanding feature of this map is the delineation of the Chicago Portage. The Chicago River, including its north and south branches, is plainly shown just as it exists. At a point on the South Branch of the river the West fork of the South Branch is shown connecting with Mud Lake. The Des Plaines River is accurately laid down and shows the turn or bend to the North where Mud Lake connects with it by means of Portage Creek. Between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines, Mud or Portage Lake is plainly shown with the word "Portage" to indicate its location.
(See page 54.)

Starved Rock, near which was Kaskaskia Indian Village, the scene of Father Marquette's missionary efforts in the Illinois Country. This rocky eminence was fortified by La Salle and named Fort St. Louis in honor of Louis XIV of France. During the regime of La Salle and Tonty it was the headquarters of the French in the Illinois country.
(See pages 6, 7, 9, 11.) *Photo by Robert Knight (1924)*

The confluence of the Kankakee and Des Plaines rivers forming the Illinois river. The upper left of picture shows the Kankakee. The Illinois is shown at the extreme right; and in the foreground is shown the Illinois and Michigan Canal, parallel with the Des Plaines.
(See pages 7, 30.) *Photo Taken in 1928*

1. The Marquette and Joliet monument at Portage, Wisconsin, on the portage between the Fox and the Wisconsin rivers. The view is toward the Fox River, taken from the point where they embarked on the Wisconsin River.

2. Monument marking the site of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier at Depere, near Green Bay, Wisconsin. Here Father Marquette stayed during the interval between his first and second voyages through the Chicago Portage.

3. The Marquette and Joliet monument on an eminence in Nelson Dewey Park, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. At the foot of this eminence is the mouth of the Wisconsin River, the place they first beheld the Mississippi.

4. Monument at La Salle, New York, on the Niagara River, marking the place where in 1678 and 1679 La Salle built the "Griffon."

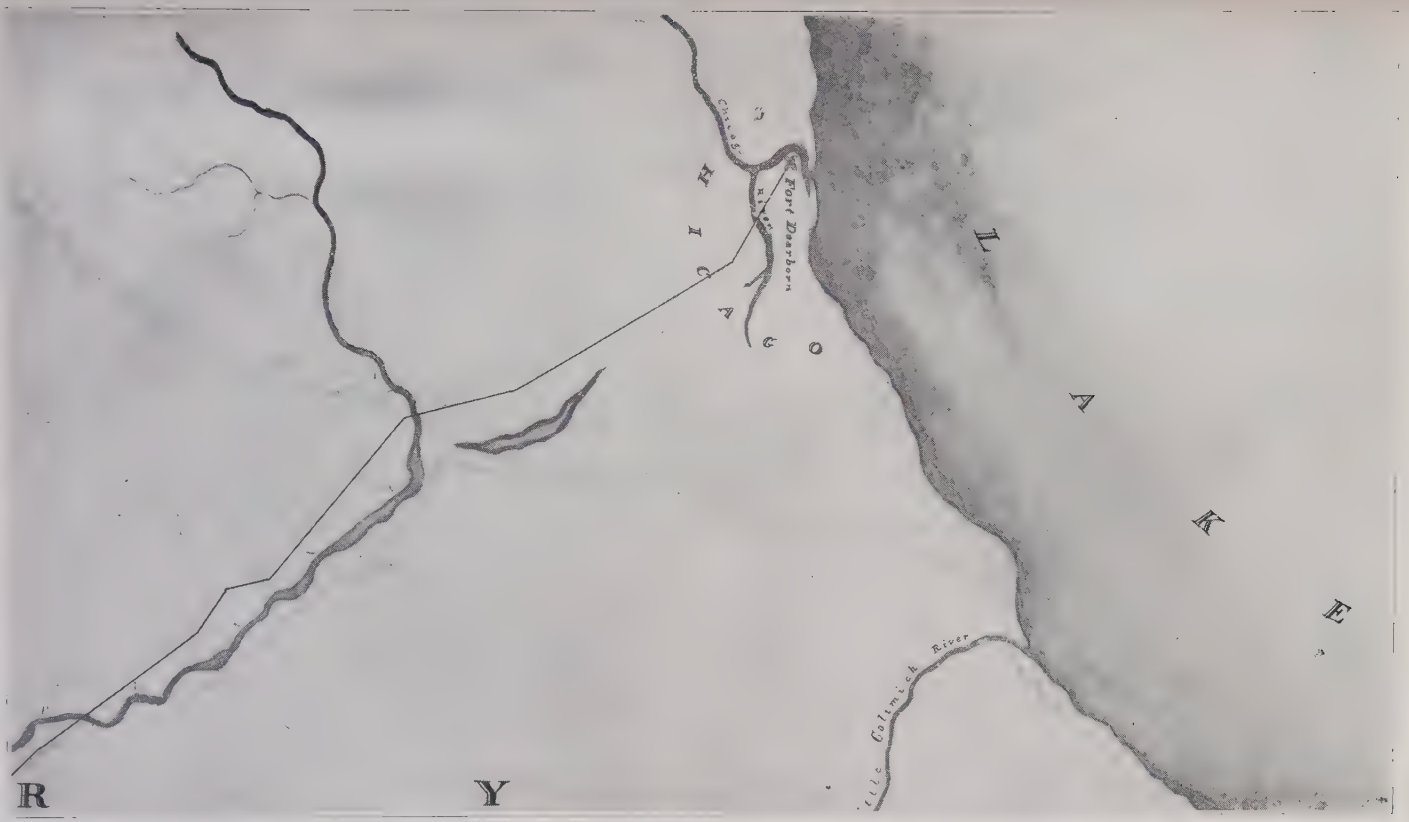
(See pages 3, 4, 5.)

Photos by Robert Knight, (1926)

Above, Fort Crèvecœur established by La Salle in 1680 on a bluff overlooking the Illinois River in Tazewell County. Peoria is shown on the opposite side of the river. Below is shown the original trench dug to protect the fort against invasion from behind.

(See pages 6, 7.)

Photos by Rob't. Knight (1926)



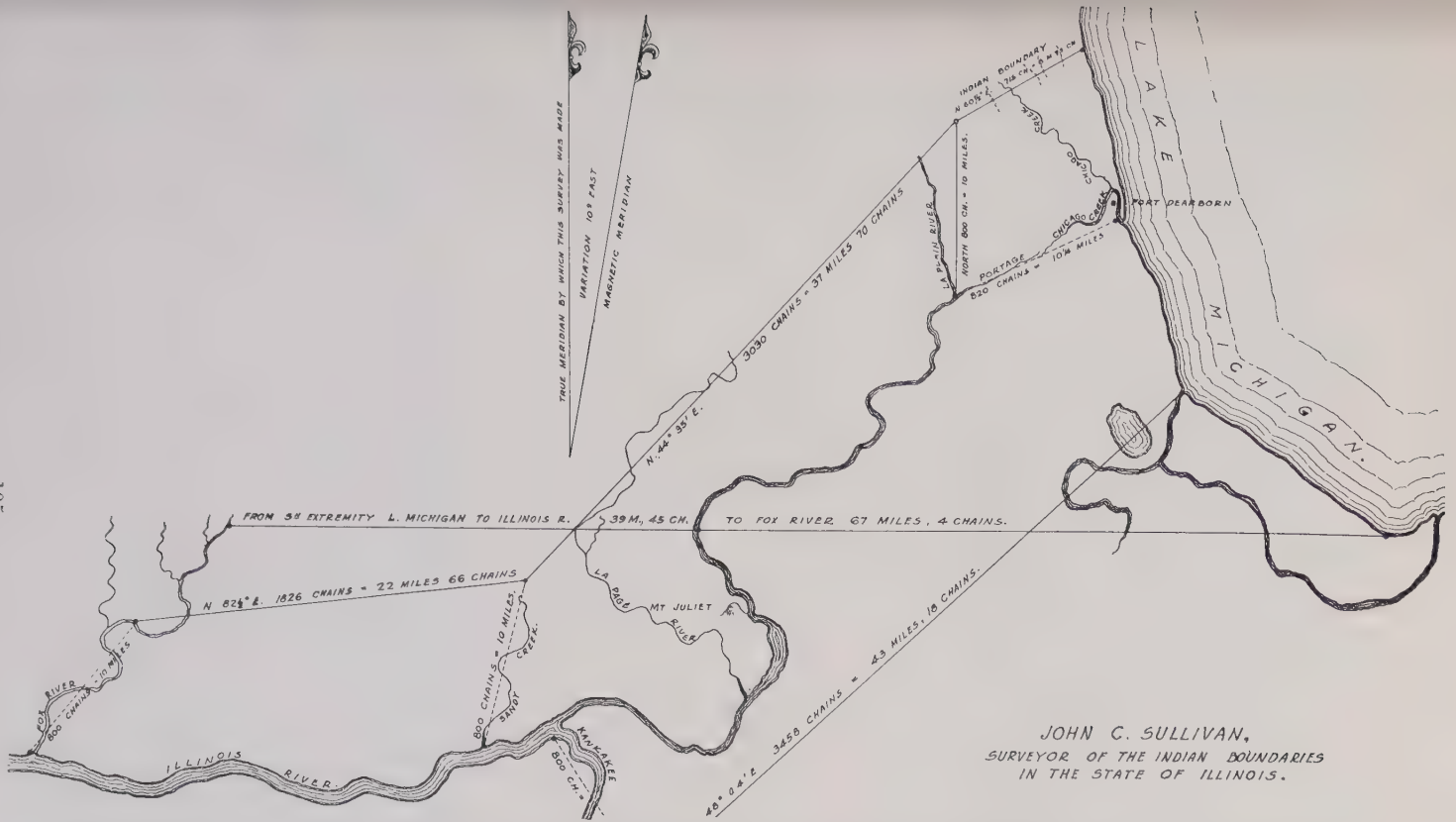
Major Long's map, made in 1816, that accompanied his report of March 4, 1817, to George Graham, Acting Secretary of War. The meander line showing the route of his expedition is the plat of the first scientifically recorded survey made in this region. The "Portage Road" was the path followed by Major Long and it is shown to be north of Mud Lake, crossing the Des Plaines at a point between Salt Creek (where is now located the modern city of Riverside) and Portage Creek. This crossing place was later known as "Laughton's Ford." The geographical features in this map are platted as visually determined.
(See pages 25, 34, 58, 71, 72, 77.)

The "west end of the portage between Chicago Creek and the Des Plaines." The view is toward the southwest. The old trail is shown leading direct to the Des Plaines. Portage Creek is just around the turn at the left of the picture. This is the exact location of the point mentioned in the Treaty of 1816, and platted in Capt. Sullivan's survey for Unnited States Commissioners, Messrs. Graham & Philips.

(See pages 15, 16, 59-61.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)*

A view of Portage Creek showing the Ogden Dam built across its bed. The view is looking toward the east and was taken from a point near the mouth of Portage Creek where it empties into the Des Plaines River.

(See pages 35-37, 65.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)*

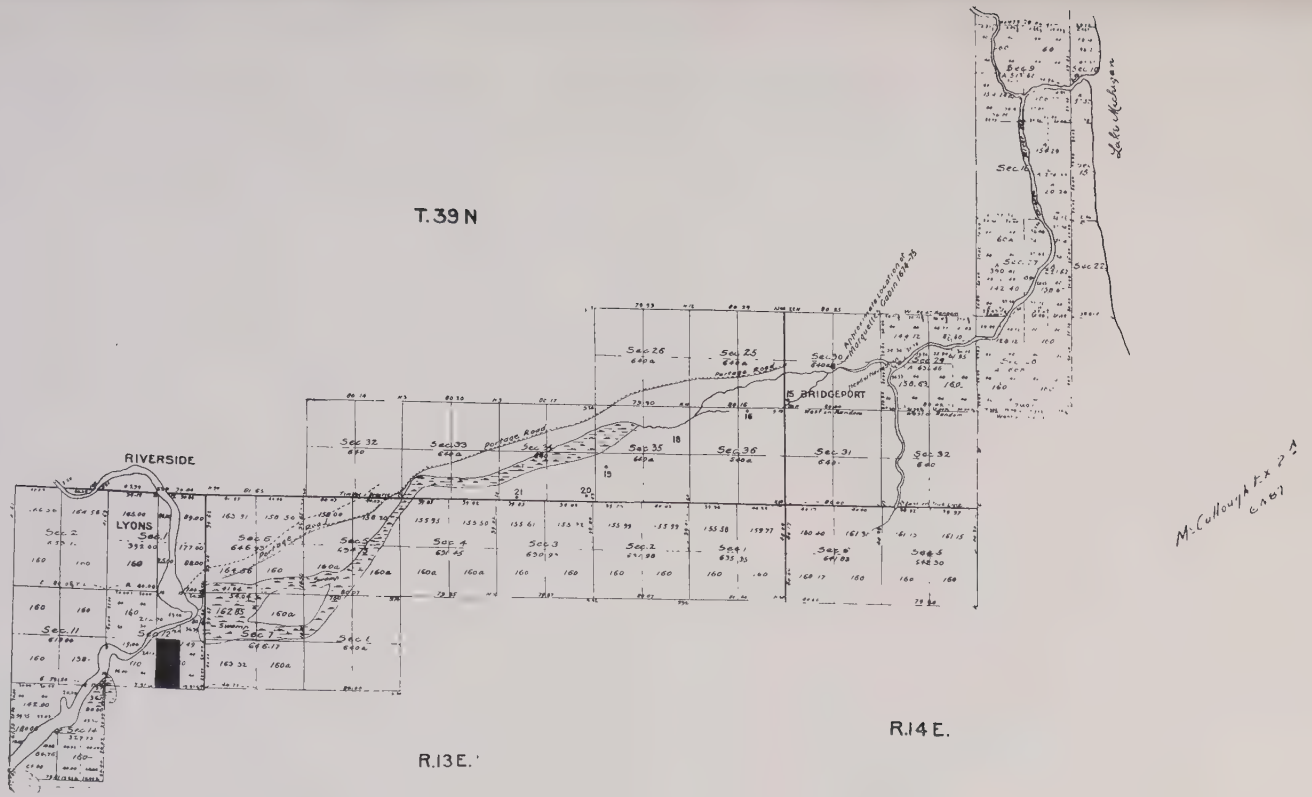

TRUE MERIDIAN BY WHICH THIS SURVEY WAS MADE
VARIATION 10° EAST
MAGNETIC MERIDIAN
INDIAN BOUNDARY
N. 60½°E.
108 CH. 8 M. 94 CH.
CHICAGO CREEK
FORT DEARBORN
LAKE MICHIGAN.
3030 CHAINS = 37 MILES 70 CHAINS
N. 44° 35' E.
LA PLAIN RIVER
NORTH 800 CH. = 10 MILES.
PORTAGE
820 CHAINS = 10¼ MILES
CHICAGO CREEK
FROM 3d EXTREMITY L. MICHIGAN TO ILLINOIS R. 39 M., 45 CH. TO FOX RIVER 67 MILES, 4 CHAINS.
N 82½° E. 1826 CHAINS = 22 MILES 66 CHAINS
LA PRAI
MT JULIET
RIVER
800 CHAINS = 10 MILES
SINGT CREEK.
FOX RIVER
800 CHAINS = 10 MILES
ILLINOIS RIVER.
KANKAKEE
800 CH. =
40° 0 4 E 3458 CHAINS = 43 MILES. 18 CHAINS.
JOHN C. SULLIVAN,
SURVEYOR OF THE INDIAN BOUNDARIES
IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Captain John C. Sullivan's map of survey made by him of the territory included in the treaty negotiated August, 1816, between the Indians of this region and the United States Commissioners Graham and Philips. The "Indian boundary lines" shown on nearly all maps of Chicago were established by this survey. The northernmost line ran from a point on Lake Michigan ten miles north of the mouth of the Chicago River, to "A point ten miles north of the west end of the Portage between Chicago Creek, which empties into Lake Michigan, and the river Desplaines, a fork of the Illinois." The map shows the west end of the Portage to be at the mouth of Portage Creek.

(See pages 48, 59, 60, 61, 64, 72, 73, 74.)

A view of Laughton's Ford of the Des Plaines looking westward from the Sanitary District diversion embankment. Picture taken in 1925 during very low water. Only twice in the past eleven years has low water made it possible to obtain a picture such as this one.
(See pages 51, 53, 66, 67.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)*

The head of Cache Island (l'Isle de la Cache) in the Des Plaines River, near Romeo, Illinois. This point is eighteen miles below "Laughton's Ford" as noted by Engineer Bucklin, and was an important landmark frequently mentioned in the chronicles of early travelers over the Chicago Portage Route.
(See pages 39, 67, 68, 69.) *Photo taken in 1928*

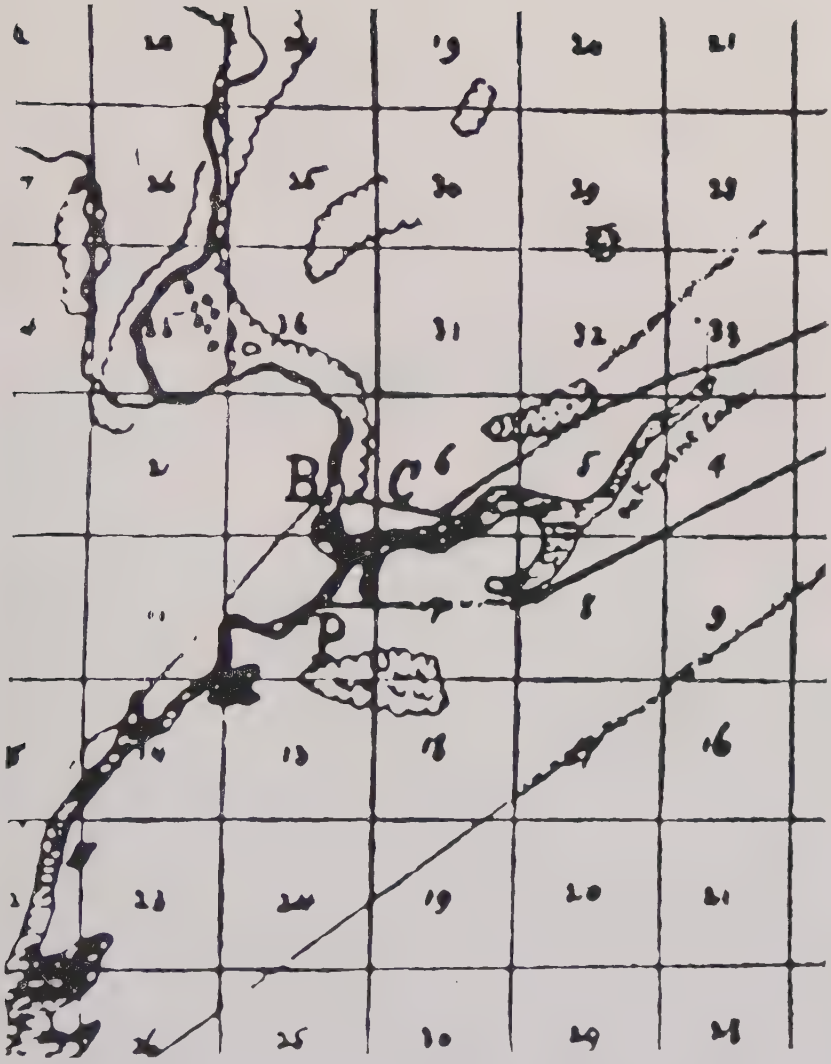


The map of survey of the Chicago River, Mud Lake and part of the Des Plaines, made in 1821 by John Walls, U.S. Government surveyor. The old Portage Road as platted by Walls is shown with many other details. The location of "Marquette's Cabin" was inserted many years later; it has no authority from Walls and is not included in his survey.

(See pages 48, 56, 61, 65, 72, 74.)

Post and Paul's map that accompanied their report of December 25, 1824, on a number of proposed routes for a canal to connect the Chicago and Illinois rivers. The line shown connecting the points designated by reference letters "B" and "C," their report states, crosses the river at the "Ford of the Des-Plaines."

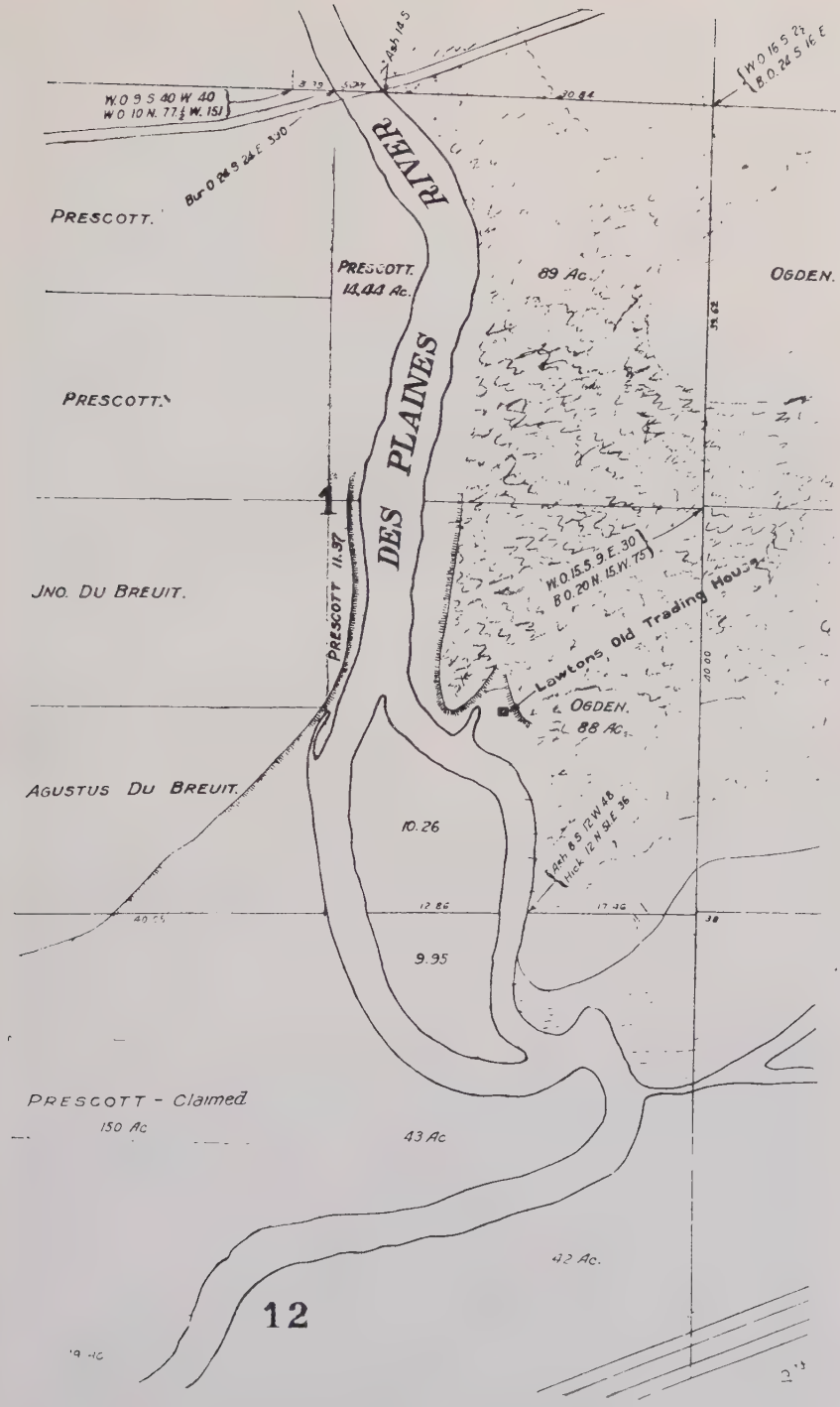
(See pages 66, 71, 74, 77.)



An enlarged detail of the Post and Paul map showing the location of the "Ford of the Des Plaines," indicated by line drawn across river between letters "B" and "C." This point is shown to be slightly west of the center of the South East ¼ of Section 1 Tp. 38 N. 12 E. This Section 1 is in the extreme northeast corner of the township bounded on the north by Pershing Road and on the east by Harlem Avenue.

A comparison of this map with Mathewson's map, showing "Lawton's Old Trading House," and with Tanner's map, showing the Portage Road crossing the Des Plaines, reveals these three maps to exactly conform with respect to the location of "Laughton's Ford."

(See pages 66, 71, 74, 77.)



Mathewson's map, made in 1865, showing "Lawton's old trading house" located at about the middle of the Southeast ¼ Section 1, Township 38 N. 12 E. near Des Plaines River, at "Laughton's Ford." Compare with enlarged detail of the Post and Paul map, and also with the Tanner Map.

(See pages 33, 47, 70.)

A view of the Mud Lake depression from the Old Tolleston Beach ridge which at this place formed the north bank of Mud Lake. The picture was taken at Harlem Avenue and West 44th Street, looking toward the east. The island in Mud Lake is shown where the cluster of trees appear in the background.
(See pages 33, 39, 47.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1920)*

The site of "Lawton's old Trading House." There is an old excavation to the right of the road in front of the three trees. This is the location of the trading house as laid down on Mathewson's map of 1865.
(See pages 69, 70, 74, 79.) *Photo by Robert Knight (1921)*

A view of the depression that was the former outlet of Glacial Lake Chicago, the predecessor of Lake Michigan, down the Illinois Valley. The direction of the view is toward the east; the elevation at the left of the picture is the junction place of the old Calumet Beach ridge and the old Tolleston Beach ridge at 47th Street and Joliet Avenue in Lyons. Along this ridge the long "Portage Road" ran northeasterly to Laughton's Ford.

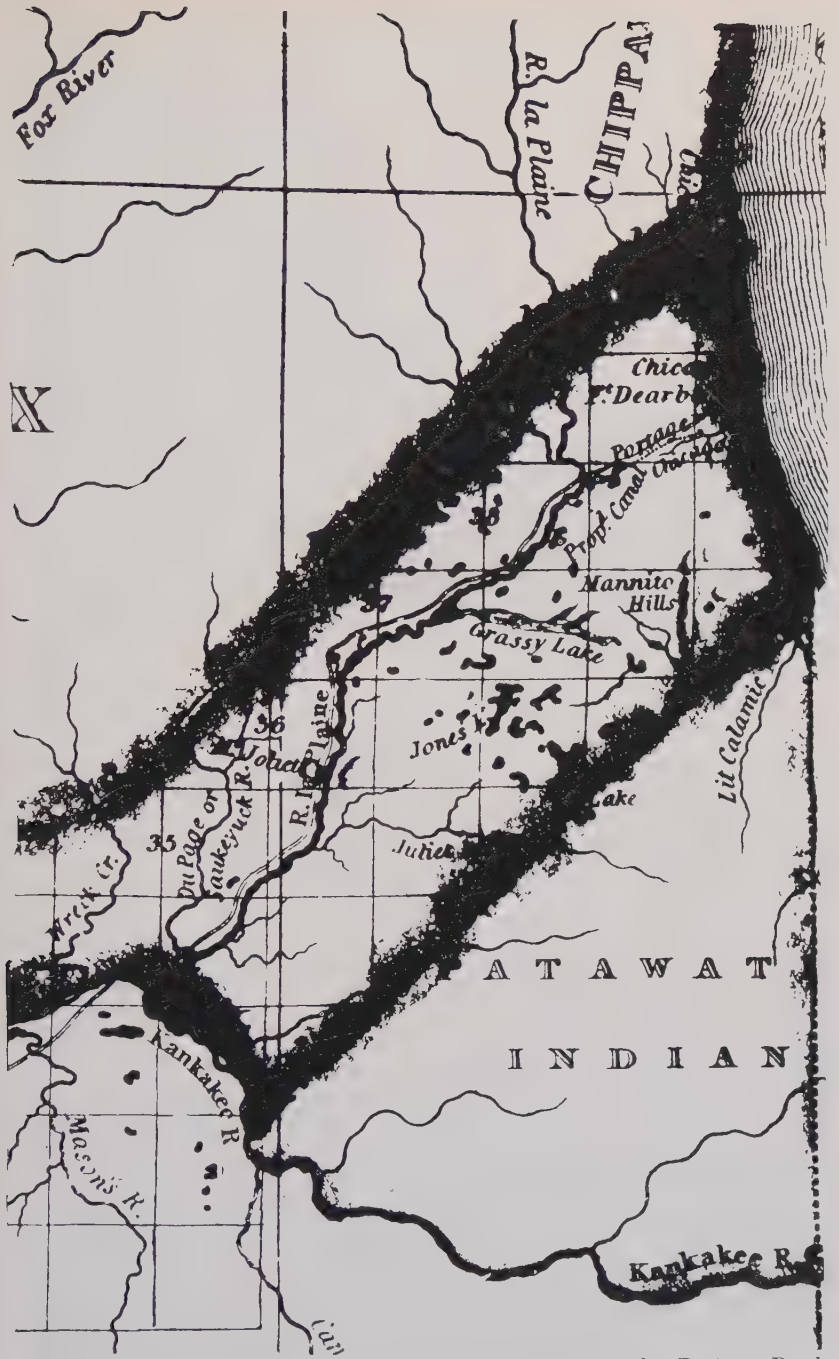
(See pages 44, 45, 76.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1927)

Stony Ford during time of low water. This ford is situated about three-eighths of a mile north of Laughton's Ford one hundred and fifty feet south of State Highway No. 4, bridge over the Des Plaines River at 42nd St. produced west.

(See pages 45, 51, 76.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)



Tanner's map published in Philadelphia in 1829 shows the Portage Road crossing the Des Plaines just west of Harlem Avenue and just south of Pershing Road, or West 39th Street. These streets are represented by the heavy lines outlining the north and east sides of township 38 North, 12 East.

All the geographical features on this map are based on accurate surveys. It shows the Portage Road extending from Fort Dearborn to "Laughton's Ford" and continuing along the north bank of the Des Plaines down the Des Plaines Valley. Just west of the present location of Channahon the road crosses the Illinois River and continues to Fort Clark at the site of the present city of Peoria.

(See pages 72, 73, 77.)

A view of the north bank of Mud Lake along which ran the Portage Road. This picture was taken during 1920. Since that time the territory shown, which lies a little east of Harlem Avenue, has been subdivided, streets have been laid out and it is improved with a considerable number of buildings.
(See pages 33, 39, 47.)
Photo by Rob't. Knight (1920)

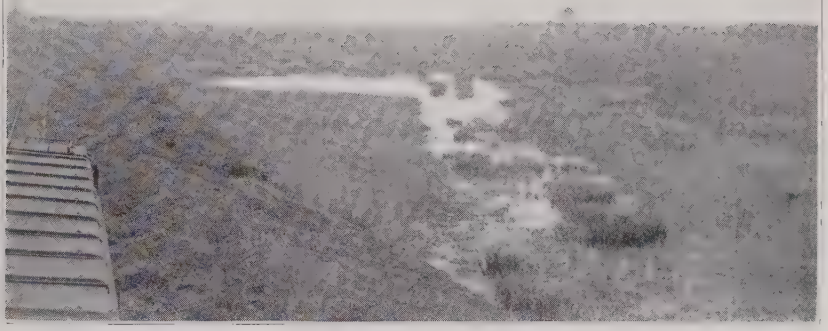
Looking north from Mud Lake bottom toward the Tolleston Beach ridge which formed the north bank of old Mud or Portage Lake. The fence at the left of the picture is on the east line of Harlem Avenue. The Portage Road ran along the crest of this ridge.
(See pages 33, 39, 47.)
Photo by Rob't. Knight (1920)

The West Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River looking east from Central Avenue a short distance south of Pershing Road. The course of this stream follows what was known in the early days as the main channel of Mud Lake. The picture shows the stream to be in the lowest part of the Mud Lake depression.

(See pages 34, 35, 129.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)*

West Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River looking southwest into Mud Lake depression from a short distance south of Pershing Road at Central Avenue.

(See pages 34, 35, 129.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)*

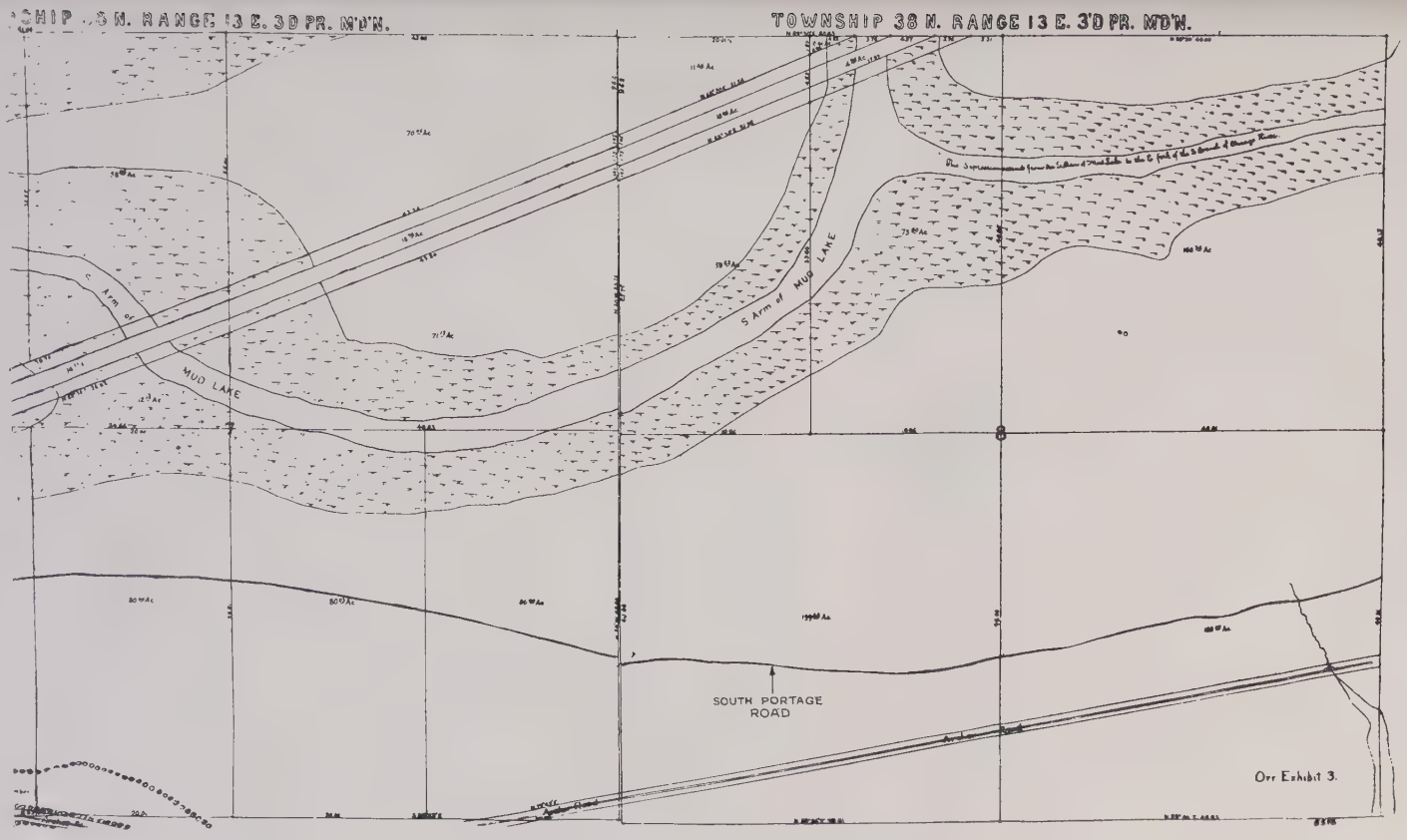


The "farthest south" of the old South Arm of Mud Lake as seen from the Chicago and Alton R. R. tracks at Nottingham Avenue and 51st Street. This part of the old South Arm exists now as it did in nature.

(See pages 35, 47.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1927)*

The Nickerson ditch looking south from West 47th Street toward the Drainage Canal spoil banks near Austin Avenue; this ditch is a segment of the old South Arm of Mud Lake lying north of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. It was deepened for the purpose of draining the old lake depression.

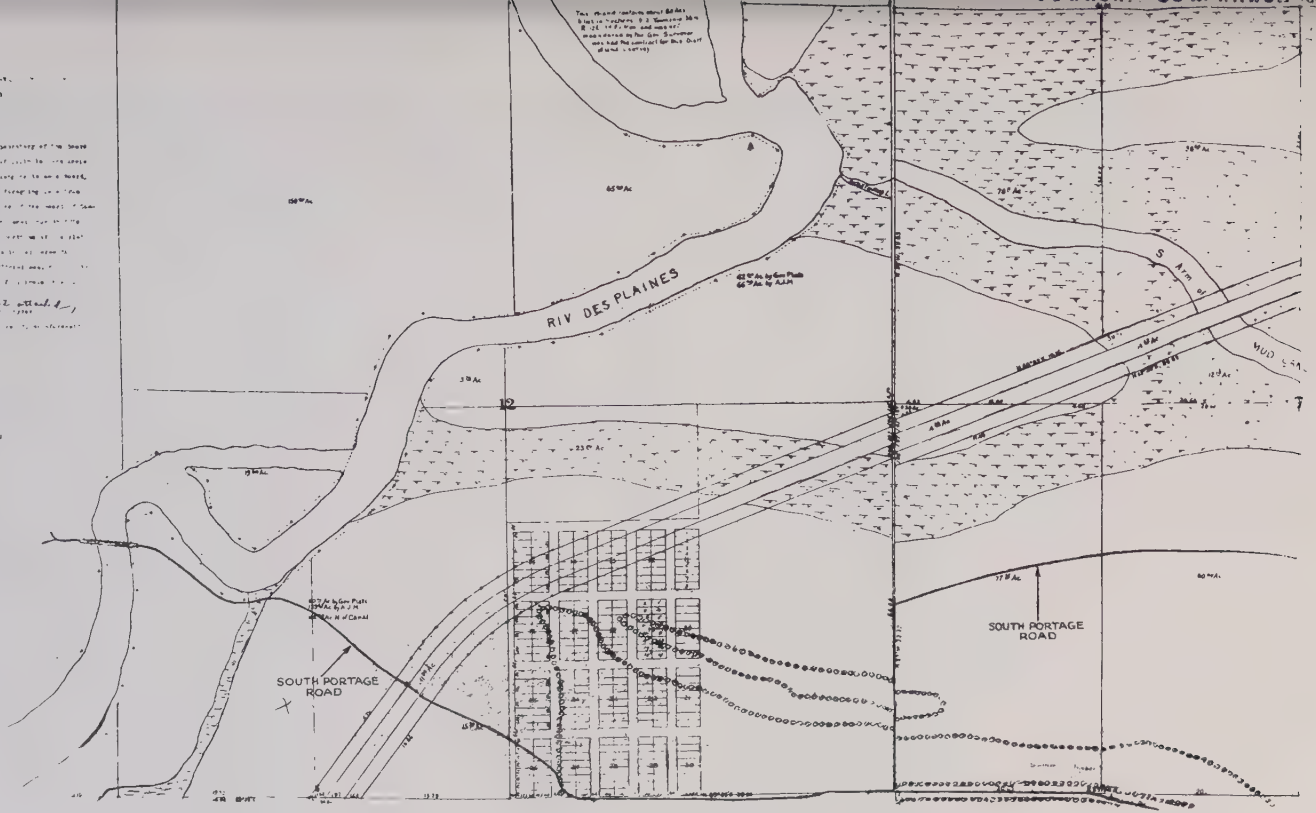
(See pages 35, 47.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)*



Part of A. J. Mathewson's Map (1847).

This portion includes Section 12, Township 38 N. 12 E. and the westerly ¼ of Section 7, 38 N. 13 E. It shows the South Arm of Mud Lake and the location of the trail that included the South Portage Road.

(See pages 33, 47, 70.)



Part of A. J. Mathewson's Map (1847).

This portion includes Section 12, Township 38 N. 12 E. and the westerly ¼ of Section 7, Township 38 N. 13 E. It shows the platting of Wall's meander of the Des Plaines at this place, and the location of South Portage Road, with the crossing place of the Des Plaines at Summit.

(See pages 33, 47, 48, 70.)

The east end of the Point of Oaks (Pointe aux Chênes) on the south bank of old Mud Lake. Here began a portage path on the south shore of Mud Lake that extended to the Summit Ford. This picture was taken at West 53rd Street about 200 feet east of Oak Park Avenue.

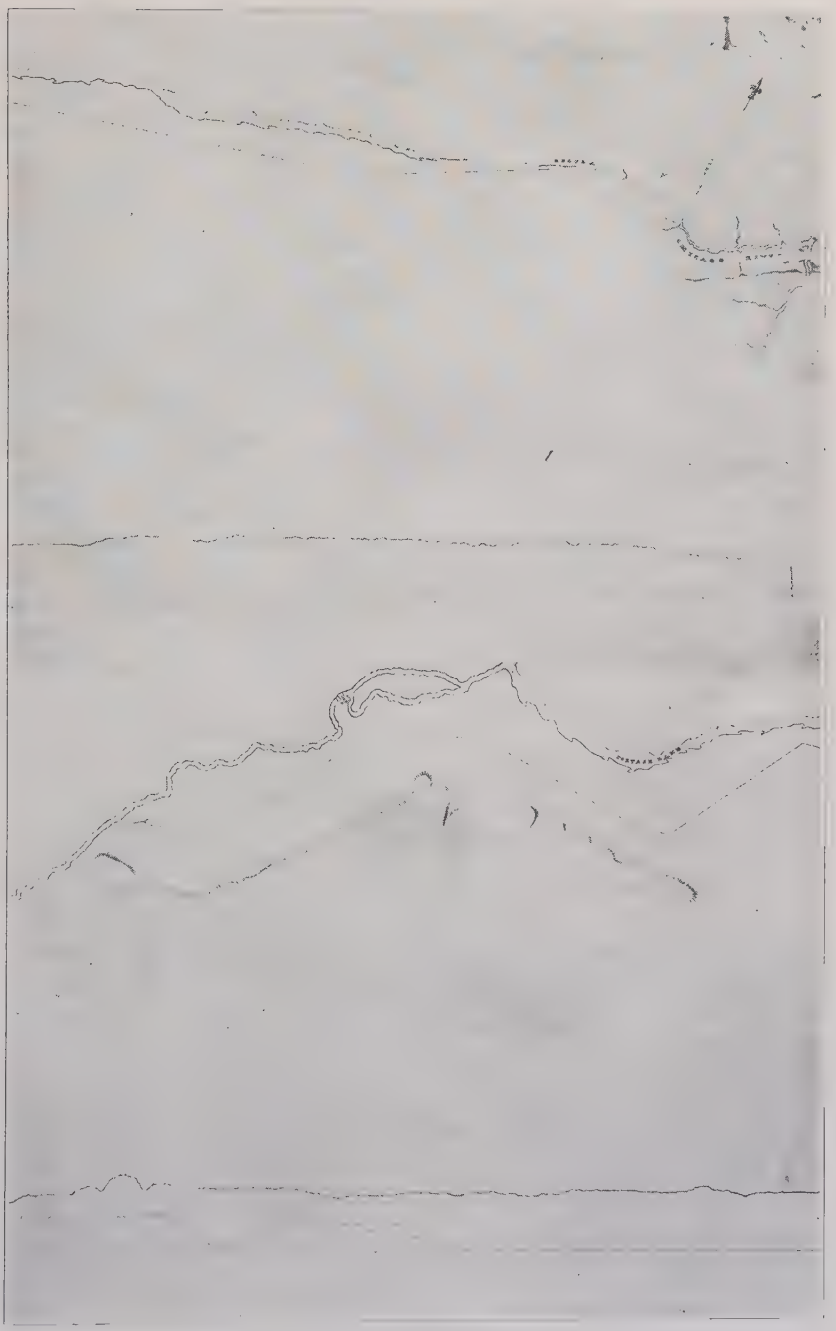
(See page 39.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1925)

The south bank of Mud Lake as seen from West 53rd Street and Oak Park Avenue. This timbered ridge, a part of the old Tolleston Beach, extending between this place and Summit, was known as the "Point of Oaks."

(See page 39.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)

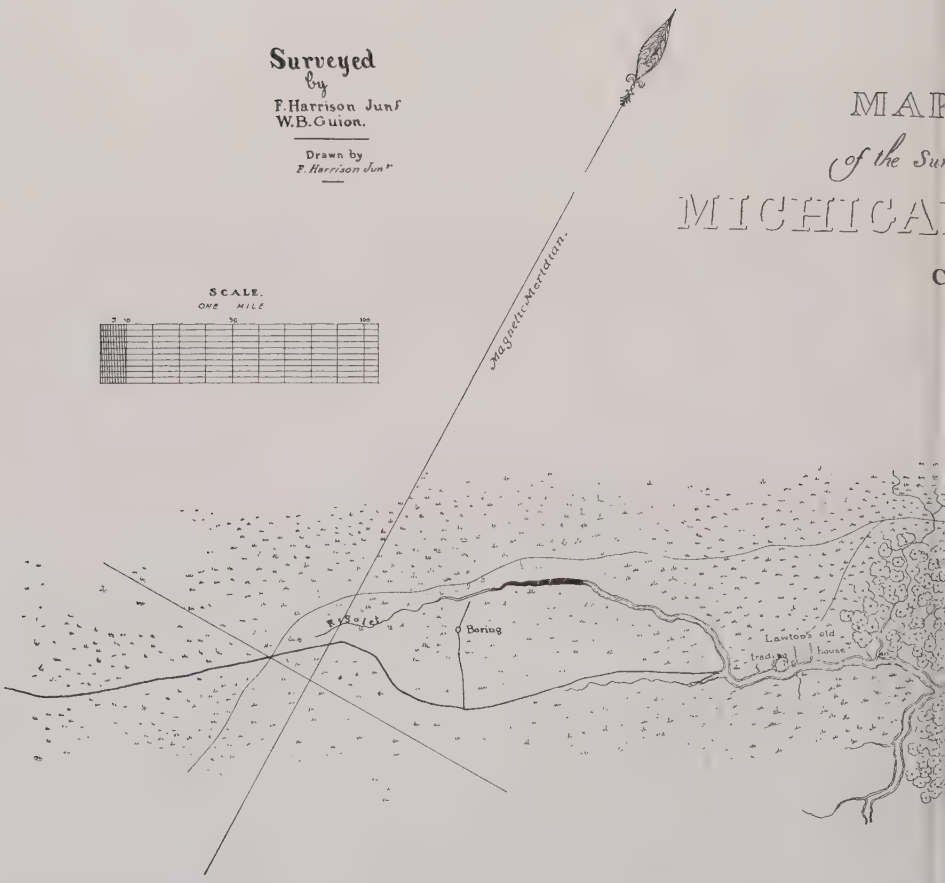


Engineer J. M. Bucklin's map of the proposed route for a canal, made by him in 1831 for the Canal Commissioners.

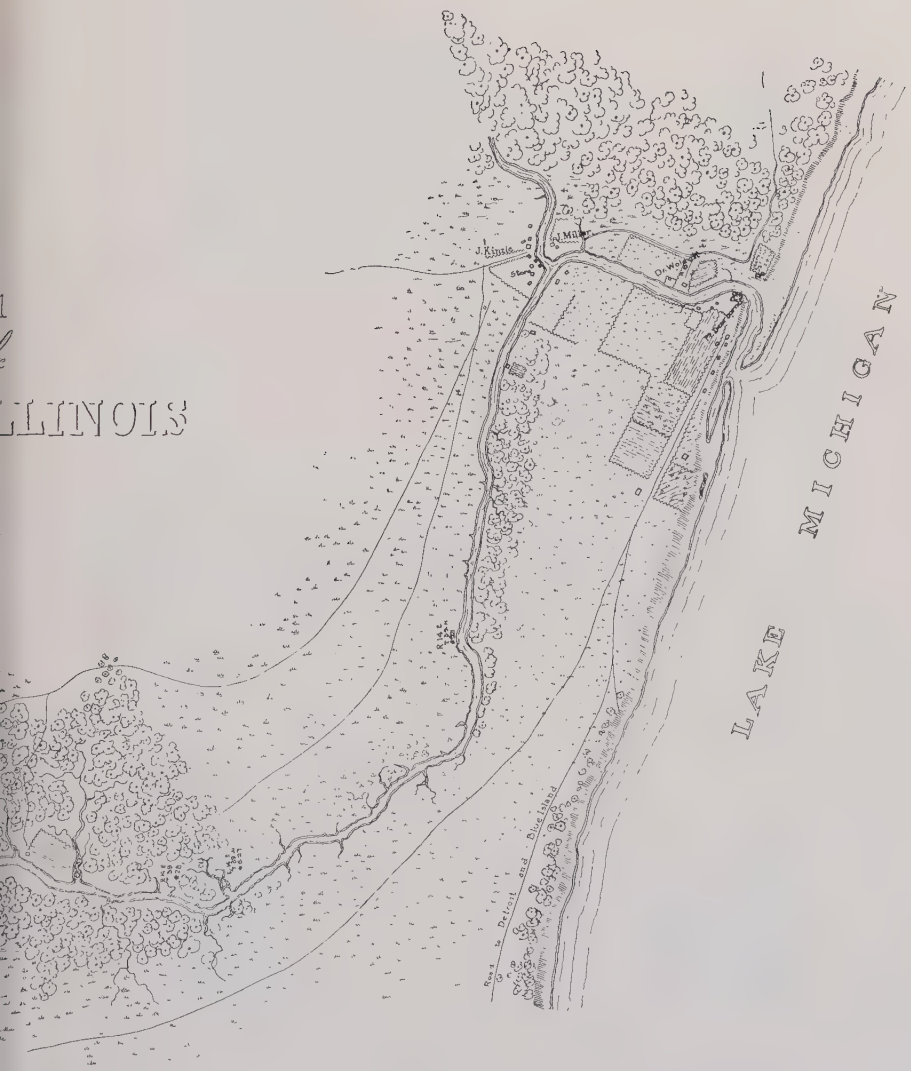
Note: the map is reproduced in two sections, the left end of the upper section attaches the right end of the lower section.

View looking east from Kedzie Avenue bridge. The eastern extremity of Mud Lake was situated where the R. R. bridge is seen crossing the river in front of the building. At that point Joliet and Father Marquette left Mud Lake and began their historic portage of half a league to the Chicago River.
(See pages 32, 33.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)*

View looking west from Kedzie Avenue bridge over the West Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River. The river as shown in the picture is the ultimate development of the main channel of old Mud or Portage Lake in this location.
(See pages 32, 33.) *Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)*



Map of a survey of the Chicago River made in 1829 by Harrison and Guion, United States buildings of pioneer settlers and traders. The location of "Lawton's old trading house" s This building probably occupied the site of Père Marquette's cabin of 1674-5. The Lawton
(See page 69.)



e The early trails leading to and from Fort Dearborn are shown together with the inently near the head of navigation indicated by a black line in the course of the river. rom this location to the Des Plaines River.

(1) View of the Chicago River east from Western Ave. The bridge in the background is at Leavitt St., the site of the head of navigation in Father Marquette's and Joliet's time where they launched their canoes into the Chicago or Portage River. That part of the river shown in the foreground is an enlargement of the Rigolet, a canal worn by the Indians and the fur-traders dragging their canoes over the Continental Divide. (See Harrison and Guion's map.)

(2) View of the Chicago River at Lincoln St. The center of the farther bank is the probable site of Father Marquette's camp in 1674-5.

(3) The Chicago Portage Road looking west from Harlem Ave.

(4) The West Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River west of Ashland Ave. Lincoln St. is situated where the small white abutment appears in the center of the plate.

(See pages 30, 34, 122, 4, 43.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)

Map taken from Blanchard's "The Northwest and Chicago," showing Indian trails conventionalized into white men's roads. Though this map has cartographer's defects it shows the general topography of the country as it looked when the great migration was on, following the Black Hawk War. Places of historic interest are indicated by circled numerals as follows: (1) The Chicago Portage Road. (F) Lawton's Ford. Used by the explorers, missionaries, fur-traders and earliest settlers. (2) Indian Boundary Lines. (3) Route taken by Maj. Long in 1823. (4) Prophetstown. (5) Site of Indian Creek Massacre. (6) Fort Beggs on the Old Ottawa Road, Plainfield, Ill. (7) Stillman Valley. (8) Gurdon S. Hubbard's Trace to Danville. (9) Little Fort, Waukegan, Ill. (10) Kelloggs Grove. (11) Wadham's Grove. (12) Starved Rock. *(See page 16, XIII.)*

A portion of the old Continental Divide that separated the Mississippi Valley from the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Valley is here shown. The picture is taken at West 46th Street and South Lawndale Avenue. The right of the picture shows the slope toward the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. The left shows the slope toward Mud Lake and the Des Plaines. The only "dry land" connection in existence between the trails in the northern and southern regions lay along this ridge.

(See pages 1, 19, 20, 31, 46, 50.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1927)

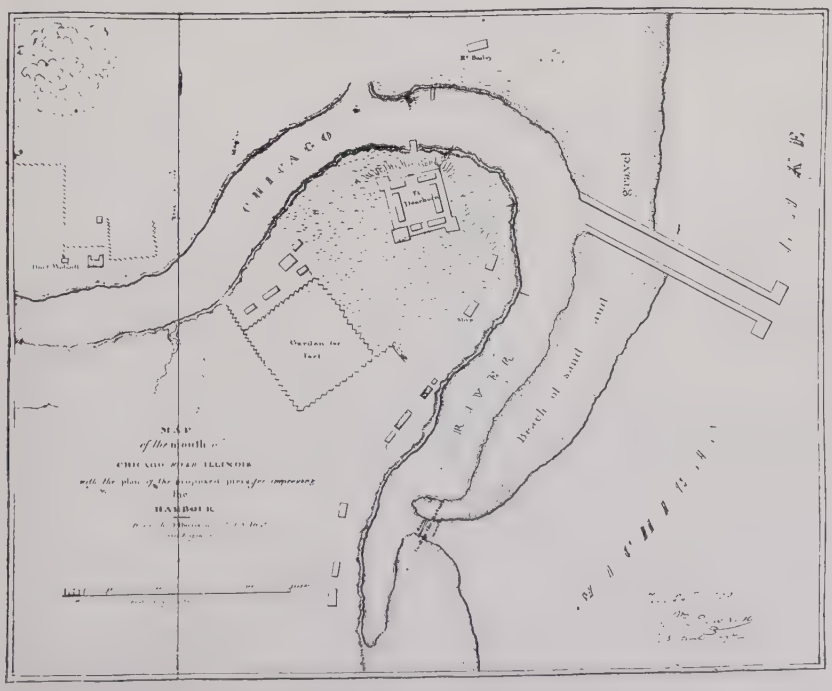
Section of cutting in Beaubien Court south of Lake St., showing the old outlet of the Chicago River into Lake Michigan. The line is drawn slightly below the junction of the underlaying clay and the sand now filling the old bed of the river.

(See pages 89, 90.)

Photo by Rob't. Knight (1926)

An enlargement of a part of Harrison and Guion's map made in 1829, showing the locations of then existing taverns and Indian traders' huts about the "Forks" of the Chicago River. Surveyor James Thompson's plat of Chicago made a year later has been superimposed to show where these buildings stood. Mr. Thompson also gives many names of the respective owners of lots shown on his plat and these are used in the identifications which follow. On the east side of the South Branch in Wacker Rrive at block 21 was John S. C. Hogan's grocery and post office. In Market Street north west corner of block 31, was Mark Beaubien's Sauganash Hotel. In block 14, north of the main stream and east of the North Branch of the Chicago River was Samuel and J. Miller's store and tavern. In block 23, Canal Street side were the lots of A. Foster and Noble and on the Clinton Street side James Kinzie owned one lot. The lot in block 29, where the "Store" is situated, belonged to Alexander Robinson, below it in the same block there is shown a building partly upon R. A. Kinzie's and partly upon Thomas Hartsell's lots. In West Water Street are shown two buildings upon the bank of the river, also at Canal and Fulton Streets two buildings are shown, in block 22 are three buildings and in section 13 is one building. No names are given as owners of the lots on which these eight last mentioned buildings are situated.

Post and Paul's map of the mouth of the Chicago River.
(See page 83.)



Harrison-Howard map of the mouth of the Chicago River.
(See pages 83-85.)

Chicago in 1821, taken from nature by Henry R. Schoolcraft. Buildings from right to left: The Kinzie house, Dr. Wolcott's U. S. Indian agency, Fort Dearborn, surrounded by a stockade, Barn with a cupola behind the Fort, Shop and wash house of the Fort, U. S. Factors' houses. Building facing the outlet of the Chicago Creek at the extreme left end of the picture was occupied at different times by Dean, Crafts and J. B. Beaubien. In it Forbes taught the first school established in the village.

Reproduced through the courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.

MADISON ST.
HARRISON ST.
ROOSEVELT RD.
16TH ST.
22ND ST.
26TH ST.
MAPLE AV.
GROVE AV.
GOLF RD.
JOLIET AV.
HARLEM AV.
OAK PARK AV.
RIDGELAND AV.
AUSTIN AV.
56TH AV.
52ND AV.
48TH AV.
KOSTNER AV.
CRAWFORD AV.
CENTRAL PARK
KEDZIE AV.
CALIFORNIA AV.
WESTERN AV.
8000
7600
7200
6800
6400
6000
5600
5200
4800
4400
4000
3600
3200
2800
2400
GLENWOOD
PLAINFIELD ROAD
BEACH
STATE HIGHWAY
SUMMIT FORD
RIVERSIDE FORD
STONY FORD
GIBSON'S FORD
PORTAGE CREEK
SOUTH BRANCH
OLD PORTAGE ROAD
POINT OF OAKS
OLD CALUMET TRAIL
CALUMET TO GREEN BAY
JOSLYN AV.
NORTH BRANCH
MUD LAKE CHANNEL
OLD PORTAGE ROAD
TOLLESTON
LARCHER AV.
TRAIL TO THE FORKS

ASHLAND AV.
RACINE AV.
HALSTED ST.
STEWART AV.
STATE ST.
SOUTH PARK
COTTAGE GROVE
WOODLAWN AV.
STONY ISLAND
VINCENNES
TRAIL
BLUE ISLAND AV.
1600
1200
800
400
0
400
800
1200
1600
MAP OF THE OLD CHICAGO PORTAGE
In Relation to
The Present City and Environs
Robert Knight
Fecit
Anno 1928
LAT 41°50 N
0
600
1200
1600
2200
2600
3100
3500
3900
4300
4700
5100
5500

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